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**STUDIES**  
**OF**  
**MODERN MIND AND CHARACTER**

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STUDIES  
OF  
MODERN MIND AND CHARACTER

*AT SEVERAL EUROPEAN EPOCHS*

BY  
JOHN WILSON

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1881

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR.



## PREFACE.

THE GREATER NUMBER of the 'studies' contained in the present volume originally appeared in the shape of contributions to periodicals. Other portions of them are now published for the first time. As regards the *reprints*, if an apology seems required for their reappearance, the following may perhaps be accepted as sufficient, from the pen of the late JOHN STUART MILL:—

'The republication, in a more durable form, of papers originally contributed to periodicals, has grown into so common a practice as scarcely to need an apology; and I follow this practice the more willingly, as I hold it to be decidedly a beneficial one. It would be well if all frequent writers in periodicals looked forward, as far as the case admitted, to this reappearance of their productions. The prospect might be some guarantee against the crudity in the formation of opinions, and carelessness in their expression, which are the besetting sins of writings put forth under the screen of anonymousness, to be read only during the next few weeks or months, if so long, and the defects of which it is seldom probable that anyone will think it worth while to expose.'—*Preface to 'DISSERTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS.'*



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# STUDIES

OF

## MODERN MIND.

### I.

#### GUICCIARDINI AND HIS 'GOLDEN MAXIMS.'

*Opere Inedite di Francesco Guicciardini Illustrate da Giuseppe Canestrini, e  
Pubblicate per cura dei Conti Piero e Luigi Guicciardini. Volume Primo,  
Ricordi Politici e Civili.—Volume Decimo, Ricordi di Famiglia, Ricordi  
Autobiografici. Firenze, 1857-1867.*<sup>1</sup>

THE family and autobiographical 'Ricordi' of Guicciardini vividly reproduce in some of its last living examples, at the opening of the modern era, that singular type of merchant statesmanship which formed so important and predominant an element in mediæval Italian republican politics. They afford us the same sort of vivid conception of that type as the 'Lives of the Norths' do of the race of political lawyers and men of business who rose into eminence in the perturbed politics of the last Stuart reigns in England. The alternately conflicting and mingling aristocratical and commercial elements in Italian public life had produced between them something of the like sort of mixed character as they afterwards did in England. Even in the iron age of the Sforzas and Borgias, eminently respectable private and public characters were often the growth of the mingled influences which affected public life, so long as public life

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, October 1871.

was not yet stamped out in Italy. What was much more rare was anything approaching the *heroic* type in Italian public men. That type is rare indeed in all ages, but in the age and country of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, as in the succeeding age of Lord Keeper Guilford and Sir Dudley North in England, all aspirations after it, as well as all approach to it, seemed to have in a manner ceased.

The sixteenth century in Italy was an age of transition from spirited if ill-organised autonomy to a dull level of spiritual and secular despotism. It presents the spectacle of a country foremost in the opening of the march of modern civilisation suddenly finding itself the helpless object of rival rapacity to ruder but stronger states; its leading men, whose minds and characters had been formed in the liberal school of world-wide commerce and uncontrolled self-government, suddenly compelled to transfer their political activity, if they were still bent on exerting it, from the councils of their country to the courts and cabinets of overbearing native or foreign princes.

The habit of writing '*Ricordi*'—for which the English word '*Records*' is not an exact equivalent—of noting down, not for immediate nor even ultimate publication, whatever, from day to day, seemed noteworthy in private or public, domestic or foreign transactions, was practised more methodically and systematically by the Italian public men of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and the first half of the sixteenth century, than perhaps it has been by those of any other age or country. It was a habit which came, as it were, naturally to those merchant-statesmen. These so-called '*Ricordi*' had no more literary design or pretension about them than any of the other business entries in their day-books or ledgers, amongst which, indeed, they were very commonly interspersed and intercalated, being made, like the rest, for use and not for show, and forming, in fact, as observed by the editor of the volumes before us, a civil and domestic autobiographic chronicle, often begemmed with moral maxims and sentences, and Scripture texts. Some of these '*Ricordi*,' including those of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and

including, in their integrity, those before us, have first seen the light in recent times.

'The Italian historians,' says Disraeli the Elder, in his 'Curiosities of Literature,' 'have proved themselves to be an extraordinary race, for they have devoted their days to the composition of historical works which they were certain could not see the light during their lives.'

If that indefatigable literary chiffonnier had had before him these ten volumes of remains of the most eminent of Italian historians, he might have found additional reason for ascribing an extraordinary character to that race of men which had in Guicciardini its most memorable representative. No part of the biographical or autobiographical matter contained in these volumes was designed, in the ordinary sense of this publishing age, to see the light at all, but simply to be preserved in the family archives of the Casa Guicciardini for the private instruction of the descendants of that house. 'As I shall in these family memorials,' says their author, 'tell the truth, I pray our descendants, into whose hands they will come, not to show them to anyone out of the family, but keep them for their own use, since I have written them solely for that end, as one who desires two things more than any other things in the world—first, the perpetual exaltation of this city [Florence] and of its liberty; secondly, the glory of our house, not during my own life only, but in perpetuity. May it please God to preserve and increase both one and the other!'

The present representatives of the house of Guicciardini, by whom these volumes are published, slightly apologise for revealing family secrets which had been kept for three centuries. Truly we know not any party in this nineteenth century, unless that of the Temporal Papacy, likely to feel scandalised at the publication of these *imperii arcana* of a bygone age. There is, indeed, enough in this long-deferred posthumous publication of the confidential communications of the favoured civil and military minister of two successive Popes to claim a place in the Papal index, if the present conductors of that organ of ecclesiastical criticism can

summon up courage to put it there. If they do, they will only give additional prominence to the fact that one of the most trusted and trustworthy servants of the Papacy, at the greatest ecclesiastical crisis, till that of our own times, confessed that, but for his personal position, he should have heartily wished Martin Luther all success against the '*scellerati preti*.'

Guicciardini opens his '*Ricordi di Famiglia*' by saying that he had been able to acquire no certain knowledge as to the origin of his family, but that the first notice he finds of it in Florence is as taking part in the exercise of the magistracy called the *priorato* about A.D. 1300. 'Our house,' he says, 'remained for a good while, that is to say, about eighty years afterwards, in a middling condition, and might be described, according to the common way of speaking, as *buoni popolani*. From that time it has grown so much in wealth and station, that it has become, and still continues at this day, one of the first families of the city, and has shared abundantly in all its honours and dignities.'

The first of his ancestors named by Guicciardini, Piero, assumed the rank of knighthood; by whom or on what account conferred his descendant could not tell. He acquired wealth in the management of large estates of a Neapolitan noble in Tuscany, and acquired, moreover, in the sharp eyes of the Church, the character of an usurer, since his son Luigi, on the death of his father, was compelled, for fear his body should be seized at the suit of the bishop, to come to a composition with that holy inquisitor, and to tax himself on a conjectural estimate of the so-called usurious gains of the deceased; which done, he was fully assured by an Augustinian friar—a *grandissimo teologo*—that the satisfaction thus given was sufficient *etiam in foro conscientiæ*. Luigi became afterwards a very rich man, arrived at high dignities, and was several times employed in important embassies to the Pope, to Giovanni Galeazzo Duke of Milan, and to Louis Duke of Anjou, when he entered Italy to contest the crown of Naples with King Charles of Arragon. He was three times Gonfaloniere of Justice, and in that capacity would

seem to have cut rather a poor figure, on occasion of a serious popular tumult, in the course of which the Gonfalonere got driven from the palace or Town Hall—the seat of municipal administration—ousted from his office, and his house demolished, the invariable accompaniment of popular triumph over parties in power in Italy of the olden time (revived under citizen Assi's Italianising auspices against the house of M. Thiers) as torture was the invariable accompaniment of the first proceedings against anyone accused of political crimes or misdemeanours. Besides being bullied (and afterwards *invested with knighthood*) by the populace and their leaders, he was continually getting surcharged in his taxes by the popular magistrates, and the greatest and most constant trouble of his life was in seeking redress from these fiscal surcharges. He died, says his descendant, to the great concern of the people, who seem to have found him a good easy executive functionary, a diplomatist disposed for peace at all price, and fiscally a good milch cow; a man of good property, on whom the municipal democracy found it convenient to throw more than his share of the public burthens.

It is a noticeable fact of family character or fortune, that wise or foolish, magnanimous or pusillanimous, well or less well governed in life and conversation, the Guicciardini family seem to have possessed the feline faculty of always falling upon their feet, and always adding something to that advance in substance and station which their famous descendant states them to have continued making down to his own time. Piero, second son of the last-named ancestor, had been, from his youth till the death of his father, disobedient and devious in his courses to such a degree that his father always prophesied he would end badly, and, having been robbed of certain sums of money and articles of value in his house, never could be persuaded, while the culprit remained undetected, that the culprit was not his son Piero. This scapegrace of the family was nearly becoming its scapegoat; since Piero, having set out against his father's will, in the suite of some embassy, was captured on his route

by the free company of a certain Otto Buonterzo of Parma, and, while the others were suffered to proceed on their journey, was alone detained for ransom, on the strength of his father's reputation for riches. The ransom of Piero was set at so high a rate that his father delayed paying it, hoping that, in course of time, a less sum would be exacted. However, in his last illness he could think of no one but his son Piero, and gave orders that he should be redeemed from captivity forthwith, at the cost of three thousand ducats. Returning to Florence, Piero's next achievement within the year was a mercantile failure, mainly owing, says our historian, to his being a 'magnificent man,' and never looking into his accounts. Adversity, however, brought out the bright side of his nature, for, in his arrangements with his creditors, he stuck firmly to paying twenty shillings in the pound [*solidi venti per lira*], only asking for time, and at the time agreed upon actually paid up the full amount by means of sales of his property. This high and generous nature of his recommended him to the friendship of men of rank and distinction, and he attained all the public honours and dignities his city had to give.

Thus aft a ragged cowte's been known  
To mak' a noble aiver.

The formerly suspected domestic thief was notably free from all taint of pecuniary rapacity or corruption; and if he had not 'put off the old man' altogether, his failings were in a different direction. He was rather high and rather short-tempered, and even in his old age, when he got angry with anyone, was quite capable of proceeding from words to blows. Even in his old age he was *vecchio lussurioso e femminacciolo forte*, leaving lots of love-letters, exchanged with the last mistress of his mature affections.

Another hereditary quality in the Guicciardini family may be considered as connected with that feline faculty, already noticed in them, of always falling upon their feet; the quality, namely, which we find, modified by individual differences, in our historian's paternal grandfather, his father,

and himself, of marked aversion from extreme counsels and extreme courses. In the grandfather, Jacopo Guicciardini, born in 1422, this quality shows itself in very amiable as well as statesmanlike shape.

'Among his other properties,' says his grandson, the historian, 'he had that of saying freely what he thought; for which Lorenzo (de' Medici) sometimes manifested anger towards him, but most times bore with him, as knowing that it proceeded from goodness of nature. One of the public functions in Florence, of which he held many in succession, was that of Gonfalonere of Justice, in the earlier period of Lorenzo's real though dissembled sovereignty. In that capacity he had to lend his formal and ministerial offices to carry through the new law regarding testaments, passed at the instance of Lorenzo de' Medici—a law which was in effect in the nature of a *privilegium*, solely designed to repress the ambition by crippling the means of his formidable rivals the Pazzi family. Jacopo Guicciardini, says his grandson, acted in this matter much against his own will, and had strongly dissuaded the passing of any such law, 'not only as a friend of the Pazzi family, but because the process seemed to him dishonest in itself, and likely to sow the seeds of mischief—as the event proved.' After the explosion of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and the tragical fate of all who had taken part in it and some who had taken no part in it, Lorenzo, says our historian, being mercilessly disposed against the whole family, either from natural temper or exasperation at the violent death of his brother, the wound he had himself received, and the narrow escape he had himself made from destruction, had thrown into prison the innocent sons of the Pazzi, who had no complicity in the plot; and had decreed that their daughters, who were left with small dowries, should form no matrimonial connections in Florence. Jacopo Guicciardini was incessant in his solicitations to Lorenzo to release these innocent youths, and at the utmost to 'confine' them, as it was called, from entering Florentine territory, and to relieve the daughters from the prohibition of marrying in their own country. After



some years he finally persuaded Lorenzo to yield on both points.

The singular combination of mercantile with public business which occupied the active life of most of the statesmen of the Italian republics was remarkably exemplified in Jacopo Guicciardini, of whom his grandson says that, though he started on a small patrimony, he received a considerable dowry with his wife, which he turned to good account as commercial capital, as appears from a book kept by him, in which the net results of all his commercial transactions are briefly noted, as well as of all legitimate emoluments derived from his diplomatic and other public appointments, which, with his gains from commerce, made up, says his grandson, 'to a quattrino' the amount of property which he left behind him at his death, and made it manifest that he had abused none of his official opportunities to usurp the property of others or to procure for himself exemptions from public taxation. He acted as captain of a commercial galley of his own in a voyage to the Levant, and as military commander, at a pinch, in the little wars of the Florentine Republic. It is added that he always applied his best efforts to disperse ill-humours in the commonwealth, and never chose to play the part of public informer or State inquisitor. His descendant adds, for the edification of the Guicciardini family of the future, that he was exceedingly well endowed by nature, being tall, fair and handsome—as fine a man as any of his time in Florence. The only drawbacks from his natural and acquired good gifts were that he was totally illiterate; we must understand our historian to mean in the 'humane letters' of universities, since Jacopo Guicciardini must have had work-day letters enough at least to keep his ledgers and carry on correspondence with his employers in his various missions. His good natural capacity, his courageous, liberal, friendly, and serviceable spirit, seem to have fully compensated with his contemporaries for his lack of polite literature; and his freedom from all malignant vices made them wink hard at certain *dulcia vitia* which did attach to him. According to his grandson's unreserved testimony,

he was somewhat more licentious in his amours, and, moreover, somewhat more studious of his eating and drinking, than might have been expected of a man of his otherwise distinguished qualities.

Piero, the father of our historian, sustained the character of the Guicciardini family, though rather in a negative than positive manner, for sagacity and sound judgment in affairs private or public, and avoidance of all extreme parts, which led him to the other extreme of taking no part at all. Whether, says his son, he was so formed by nature, or whether the course of events, which indeed was violent and extraordinary in the times he lived in, seemed to require corresponding caution and circumspection, so it was that he proceeded in his affairs with little spirit and much suspiciousness, undertaking few enterprises, acting in the affairs of State with great slowness and deliberation, and never, except when constrained by conscience or necessity, distinctly declaring his sentiments on matters of importance. Hence it happened that, never putting himself forward as the head of a party or any new movement, he did not keep himself so currently as he might have done in the mouths of the many. His son, however, admits that this mode of action or inaction served one purpose at least: that through all the turbulent movements which took place in his time he preserved his dignity and tranquillity, more fortunate in that respect than any other man of his standing and eminence, all of whom incurred in those times dangers either of life or property.

Our historian says for himself that he wished to enter the Church, not to participate, 'like most other priests,' in its fat slumbers, but because he calculated, with great colour of reason, that a young man like himself, well grounded by study and practice in jurisprudence (a species of lore then much more in request at the Court of Rome than theology), had a fair foundation for rising high in the Church, and might very well hope to be one day a Cardinal. His father, however, was conscientiously indisposed to see any of his sons in the priesthood, 'though,' says our historian, with a touch of pathos, 'he had five sons'—'considering the dis-

ordered condition of the Church in those times'—and preferred to sacrifice the present profit of rich benefices, as well as the future prospect of seeing a son of his in high rank in the Church, rather than soil his conscience by making that son a priest from motives of cupidity or ambition. 'Such,' says our historian, 'was the real cause which decided him; and I had to content myself the best I could with his decision.'

It may be thought that our historian here makes posterity as much the confidants of the character of his own ambition as of his father's conscience. His youth had no dreams—or rather the one dream of his youth was advancement in public life, under whatever auspices, an advancement which he attained in early manhood, and lost, when public life itself was lost in Italy. Guicciardini's practical political motto throughout his public career was 'I serve.' His best apology is that the sword in his day in Italy no longer gave place to the gown, and that independent public action had ceased to be possible in Italian public affairs. To have any hand in the administration of those affairs it had become necessary to have some footing in the Courts of Popes or Princes. It is curious to observe how, in a different form and by a circuitous course, Guicciardini's young ambition to mix himself with ecclesiastical politics was at length gratified. If he had dutifully submitted to exclusion by paternal authority from the prospect of himself becoming one day a Cardinal—perhaps a Pope—he did the next best thing for himself, in his keen pursuit of the main chance in politics, by attaching himself to the political service of Popes and Cardinals.

To the young Guicciardini—who seems, in the sense of romance or sentiment, never to have been young—his choice of a consort was as mere a selection of a stepping-stone for ambition as had been his choice of a profession. Any consideration of personal preference seems to have had as little weight with him in that matter as with his father. In this instance, however, as concerned money at least, the son had more elevated views than the father. His ambition was that

of eminence, not mere wealth, and he did not allow paternal authority to dissuade him from fixing his choice on a family (the lady seems to have been a quite immaterial element in the transaction) whose head was a personage of political importance in the Florentine commonwealth, and might be able to push forward his son-in-law in the path of promotion. This consideration was paramount with him over his father's prudential suggestions that a *larger dowry* would be desirable, and could be had with other damsels of good houses. Perhaps such suggestions might have had more weight with the son, if he could have foreseen the disappointment, by the premature death of his father-in-law, of the hopes he had formed of getting a start in public life by the connection. Our historian concludes his ingenuous narrative of his matrimonial doings in the following strain of evidently sincere if not refined piety: 'Please God the affair may have been for the health of my soul and body, and God pardon me if I have used too much importunity with Piero [his father] in the matter, since though as yet I am satisfied with having made the connection, I cannot help some scruple and doubt whether I may not have offended God, especially considering the qualities of a father such as mine is.'

Guicciardini's 'Ricordi Politici e Civili' are now for the first time published, as the present editor states, in their original integrity, free from additions or mutilations. Alloyed and clipped as they had been by the timidity or ill-taste of previous editors, Guicciardini's civil and political *γνώμαι*, first published about the middle of the sixteenth century, under the title of 'Avvertimenti di Messer Francesco Guicciardini,' had won the epithet '*aurei*' from subsequent Italian writers. Signor Canestrini, the present editor, says of them 'that these "Ricordi" appear truly marvellous, whether by the incomparable acuteness of the sentences on men and things, the vast learning, or the *elegantissima* simplicity and natural spontaneity of the style.' Without echoing Italian superlatives, we may be able to show by our extracts that the praise of simplicity and spontaneity is well

deserved by the style of Guicciardini *in undress*, and that the natural acuteness and acquired knowledge exhibited in his estimates of events and persons deserve no less ungrudging, if less enthusiastic, recognition than that accorded them by the editor of the volumes before us.

The first of these 'Ricordi' which occurs for citation has reference to those earlier years of their author, some characteristic traits of which have already been placed before our readers, and curiously completes our idea of that very marked trait of character, the constant aim at advancement, rather than at any sort of pleasure or acquirement, for its own sake. There is a remark recorded in Lady Minto's 'Memoirs of Hugh Elliot,' that, while continental nations (the writer of the remark had been conversant mostly with Germans and Italians) seek social intercourse chiefly for the pleasure it affords, the English cultivate society chiefly with a view to advantage in one shape or other. Exactly in a like spirit we find Guicciardini, the man, regretting that Guicciardini, the youth, had not bestowed more attention on the amusing and social accomplishments of his age:—

I made light when I was young of knowing how to play, dance, sing, and other like levities—or of writing well, riding well, dressing well, and all such things which seem to give men more of ornament than substance. I have since, however, wished it had been otherwise, since if indeed it is inconvenient that youths should lose too much time on such things, I have seen nevertheless by experience that these ornaments, and the knowing how to do everything well, add dignity and reputation to men even otherwise well qualified, so that it may be said that he who lacks them lacks something. Besides which, abounding in all such accomplishments opens the way to favour with princes, and is sometimes the principle or source of great profit and exaltation—the world and princes not being constituted as they should be, but as they are.'

Guicciardini's first important public employment was his embassy to Spain from the Florentine Republic in 1512, when he had only attained the age of twenty-eight, that is, two years short of the age prescribed by law in that republic for diplomatic appointments. This embassy was not the

first inevitably fruitless mission of the tottering Florentine democracy to that astute monarch Ferdinand the Catholic, whose character the young diplomatist appreciated with equal astuteness, and has placed vividly on record. Two 'orators' from Florence had been commissioned to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1498 to justify their Government for not having entered into the league formed three years previously between the Pope, the Venetians, and the Emperor Maximilian against Charles VIII. of France, and to defend it from the charge of espousing the cause of France in Italy against Spain. At both epochs the defence was necessarily a lame one, since at both the charge was so far well-founded, that the Florentine democracy, at first under the influence of the fervid and enthusiastic eloquence of Savonarola, and afterwards under the feebly popular administration of Soderini, clung persistently to the French alliance in preference to that of Spain, Venice, and the Pope, and refused to join the so-called *santissima lega* formed under their auspices. The Florentine democracy played its cards so badly as never to oblige France sufficiently by its adhesion to obtain any equivalent support from that power, while it disobliged the Italian powers in league with Spain sufficiently to incur their more than probable hostility. This hostility it was Guicciardini's Spanish mission to avert 'by art and prudence;' but as he came empty-handed of powers to conclude any convention whatever with King Ferdinand, he could naturally expect nothing but good words in exchange for those he brought. The following passage from Guicciardini's 'Ricordi' has pointed reference to the fatal policy of the Florentine Government in this respect at the time when it sent him on his first fruitless diplomatic mission :—

Neutrality in the wars of others is good for him who is powerful in such a degree that he has nothing to fear from the one who remains superior, since he preserves himself without trouble, and may hope for gain from the disorders of others. Otherwise it is inconsiderate and injurious, since he remains the prey of the conqueror or the conquered. And worst of all is that which is preserved not by judgment but by irresolution—that is to say, when, without coming to a reso-

lution whether you will be neutral or no, you conduct yourself in such a manner that you do not satisfy even that party who would be content at the time if you would assure him that you would be neutral. And into this last species of neutrality republics are more apt to fall than princes, since it often proceeds from those being divided who have to deliberate; so that, one counselling this, another that, enough of them never agree together to effect a decision for one opinion any more than another—and this was just the case with the Florentine Government of 1512.

The following remarks, which Guicciardini was led to make by his observation of Ferdinand's character, bequeathed at least one result, for the instruction of after ages, of his otherwise resultless mission to that reputed paragon of kingcraft:—

Even if one has the name of a dissembler and deceiver, it is seen nevertheless that sometimes his deceits find dupes. It seems strange to say so, and yet it is very true and within my own memory, that the Catholic King Ferdinand of Spain was beyond all other men of that reputed character, and yet in his artifices he never wanted those who believed him more than he deserved, and it needs must be that this proceeds either from men's simplicity or cupidity—some being duped by easily believing what they desire, others by lack of knowledge.

I observed when I was ambassador in Spain to King Ferdinand of Arragon, a wise and glorious prince, that, whenever he desired to engage in a new enterprise, or other affair of importance, he did not first publish and then justify his intention, but he governed himself just contrariwise, artfully contriving in such a manner that, before it was understood publicly what he had in his mind, it was published that the king ought to do such a thing for such or such reasons, and therefore when it was afterwards published that he intended to do that which had first been made to appear to every one to be just and necessary, it is incredible with what favour and what praise his decisions were received.

We make the following citation from Guicciardini's editor and apologist:—

The prudence and ability of which Guicciardini had given proof in his Spanish legation opened the way for him to higher posts of trust and honour. He was appointed, shortly after, a councillor and minister of Pope Leo X., and afterwards of Clement VII., who entrusted to him affairs and offices of the highest importance—such as

the governments of Modena and Reggio, and afterwards of Parma, the presidency of Romagna, and the vice-papal administration of Bologna. During this period the free government of Florence fell; and that republic having been subjected by the conventions between Charles V. and Clement VII. to the tyranny of Alexander de' Medici, Guicciardini, with the hope and intent—continues his apologist—of mitigating the ills of his country, accepted the office of councillor, not only of Alexander, but of his successor Duke Cosmo, a tyrant not indeed milder, but more cautious and more dexterous. And it must be supposed [we are still citing Signor Canestrini] that he served and supported each in succession with the view of preserving the nominal autonomy at least of Florence under native princes at a time when the agents, ministers, and general of Charles V. were aiming at nothing short of occupying and governing in the name of the emperor all the hitherto independent states and cities of Italy.

There was a less elevated and more matter-of-fact reason why Guicciardini took service under the restored Medici, now finally rendered avowedly absolute over his native city Florence. In the total eclipse of Medicean power and prestige at its Papal head-quarters ensuing upon the capture and sack of Rome in 1527, the Florentines, who seized the opportunity to re-establish democracy, not only would neither trust nor employ Guicciardini, whom two successive Popes had employed and trusted, but pursued him with the most palpably groundless charges of pecuniary malversation. This fact, if it was known to Sismondi, might have mitigated the severity of the terms in which he took notice of Guicciardini's desertion to the opposite camp,<sup>1</sup> and may qualify, on the other hand, our credence of his purely patriotic inducements for attaching himself to the only one of the two contending parties who would accept his adhesion. 'The vulgar,' says Signor Canestrini, 'ever exaggerating, and never discriminating in its judgments, when a once powerful administrator of public affairs falls into disgrace or loses office, is wont with one voice to accuse him, not of his real sins of commission or omission, but of public robberies, rapines, and malversations, from which his known character stands high above all suspicion.' There is the

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, vol. xvi., p. 105.



strongest evidence in Guicciardini's writings, official and autobiographical, that here, at least, was not the weak point in his panoply. We may cite, as bearing on it, the following passage which occurs in the 'Ricordi':—

It is not possible to take such precautions as that ministers shall not plunder. I have myself been perfectly pure, and have had governors and other ministers under me, and with all the diligence I have used and all the example I have given them, I have never been able to provide sufficiently against this. The reason is that money serves for everything, and that, in the present mode of living, a rich man is more esteemed than a good one. What still more causes it, is the ignorance or ingratitude of princes, who bear with the bad, and give no better treatment to him who has served well than to him who has done just the contrary.

We have already cited the unreserved expression of Guicciardini's intimate sentiment respecting the service, to which nevertheless he devoted the entire prime of his public life. That expression recurs again and again in his 'Ricordi':—

'I desire,' he says, 'to see three things before my death, but I doubt, however long I live, if I shall see any one of them—a well-ordered republican regimen in our city—Italy liberated from all the Barbarians—and the world liberated from the wicked tyranny of priests.'

Of the duty of good citizens in States which have lost their liberties, we find written, not without self-reference, as follows :—

I believe it to be the duty of good citizens, when their country falls into the hands of tyrants, to seek to have influence with them, in order to persuade them to good and against evil. And certainly it cannot but be the interest of a city that at all times good men should have authority; and although the ignorant and passionate people in Florence have always understood it otherwise, even they must perceive how pestiferous would be the government of the Medici if they had nobody about them but fools and knaves.

Guicciardini was no whit more favourable to popular than to priestly or monarchical tyranny. He writes of it, as usual,

from experience—that of Florentine democracy in its intolerance of all superiorities whatsoever :—

Who names a people names truly a fool, a monster full of confusions and errors, and whose vain opinions are as far remote from the truth of things as, according to Ptolemy, Spain is from the Indies! . . . He who would live at Florence with the favour of the people must avoid the reputation of ambition, and every indication of wishing to appear even in the smallest details of daily life greater, more splendid, or more delicate than others. For in a polity which is wholly founded on equality and full of envy, it follows of necessity that every one becomes odious who falls under the suspicion of not willing to be on a footing of equality with others, or who seeks to distinguish himself from the common mode of living.

Guicciardini's wisdom, it must be admitted, was of that sort which sounds the depths rather than soars to the heights of moral and social existence. His apology must be that in his age were more depths to sound than heights to soar to. How keen his insight into the weaknesses and vices of men the following lines may testify :—

It is observed that old men are more avaricious than young ones, whereas it should be the contrary, because having less time to live, less will suffice them. The reason is said to be because they are more timid. I do not believe that this is the true reason, because I see many of them much more cruel, more licentious, if not in act, in desire, more abhorrent from death than young men. The reason I believe to be that the longer one lives, the more one gets a habit of living, and the more men attach themselves to the things of the world, the more affection they have for them, and the more they are moved by them.

The following is no new precept of worldly wisdom, but has a somewhat shrewd codicil annexed to it :—

Observe carefully in your conversation never without necessity to say things which reported may displease others, since often, in times and modes which are not thought of, these greatly hurt yourselves : observe this I say carefully, since many even prudent men err in it, and it is difficult to abstain from so erring ; but if the difficulty is great, much greater is the fruit which results from thence to him who knows how to do it. If, however, necessity or anger induce you to speak injuriously to another, take care at least to say things offensive only to him ; for example, if you wish to injure an individual, do not

speak evil of his country, family, or parentage; since it is great folly, when you only wish to offend one, to speak injuriously of many.

The following passage occurs in Lord Campbell's 'Life of Brougham,' which may serve as a negative illustration of the above politic precept:—

He had always great delight in laughing at briefless barristers, a class to which at some periods of his life he was himself in great danger of belonging. He was very incautious in attacking bodies of men, and thus sometimes excited more ill-will than by a personal quarrel which might be soon appeased. Having flattered some of the bishops by asking them to name incumbents for small livings in his gift, he offended them all by saying in their absence, when they had left the House to go to dinner, 'that their god was their belly.'

The following excellent rule of life for those in responsible functions is applicable to all kinds and all stations:—

Do not make more account of having favour than of having reputation; since, reputation being lost, the benevolence of others is lost with it, in place of which succeeds slight esteem; but he who maintains his reputation finds no want of friends, favour, and benevolence.

To the like effect:—

You cannot have a greater virtue than to keep account of honour, since he who does so fears no dangers, and does no base actions. Hold this point fast therefore, and it will be almost impossible that everything should not succeed well with you.—*Expertus loquor.*

It is only fair to suppose that in his more elevated, as in his less elevated utterances, Guicciardini set down for his descendants the real results, as he himself viewed them, of his own personal experience. These he sets forth more specifically as follows:—

I have been for eleven successive years employed in Governments of the Church, and have enjoyed so much favour with my superiors and the people as well, that I was likely to have remained long in those employments, but for the events which happened in 1527 in Rome and Florence. And I found nothing which established me in them more firmly than proceeding as if I did not care to keep them, since resting on this foundation I did without respect or submission whatever properly belonged to the charge I held, which gave

me a reputation that favoured me more, and with more dignity, than any insinuation, interest, or industry I could have used.

All the evidence derivable from the official correspondence, which forms a large part of the publication before us, goes to verify the character Guicciardini here claims for himself of having carried into servitude itself the spirit of an honourable, if not exalted freedom. In his several and successive vicegerencies for the Vicegerent of Heaven he stoutly contested the abusive privileges and exemptions of ecclesiastics from lay jurisdiction. And he always addressed the Popes he successively served in the language of independent counsel.

The following more general political observations bear the stamp of experience, and, like many of our author's, are true for all time :—

Things doomed to fall not by force but exhaustion, go on much longer than would have been believed at first, as well because the motions are slower than is supposed, as because men, when they are obstinately resolved to endure the worst, do and suffer much more than would have been believed possible. Thus we have seen that a war which was calculated to come to an end by famine, by hardship, by want of money, and the like, has lasted longer than would have been believed beforehand. Thus the life of a consumptive patient always prolongs itself beyond the opinion doctors and bystanders have had of it ; and a merchant, before he fails by being eaten up with usury, keeps moving longer than was expected.

*Things probable probably false.*

I am slow in believing, till I have sure authority, news which are in themselves probable ; because, being already in men's conjecture, someone is easily found to forge them ; and therefore when I receive any such without a certain author, I suspend belief of them, more than of others of an opposite kind.

*Things universally desired seldom accomplished.*

The Marquis of Pescara said to me on the election of Pope Clement VII., that the things which were universally desired were hardly ever accomplished. The reason of this may be that it is the few and not the many that commonly pull the wires which set in motion the affairs of this world, and the ends those have in view are

almost always different from the ends of the many, and accordingly produce different effects from those which the many desire.

*In the multitude of counsellors there is no safety.* •

Messer Antonio da Venafrà was wont to say, and said well—Put seven or eight wise men together, they become so many fools; since not agreeing they rather bring things into dispute than to a conclusion.

*Slow decision good—slow execution bad.* °

Men cannot be blamed for being a long time in resolving themselves, since, if conjunctures take place at which it is necessary to decide promptly, yet in general he who decides quickly errs rather than he who decides slowly. But what is to be blamed mightily is slowness of execution after a resolution is taken, since it may be said *that* always hurts and never helps unless by accident.

*Why conspiracies are generally detected.*

He who will take notice of the course of combinations and conspiracies may observe that nothing is more ruinous to them than the desire to carry them on too securely, since by this more time is interposed, more men implicated, and more things mixed up with them, which is a cause why practices of that sort are brought to detection. Moreover, it may be believed that Fortune, under whose dominion such things are placed, is angry with those who wish to liberate and secure themselves from her power. I conclude, therefore, that it is safer to execute them with some risk than with much precaution.

*What men ought to do—what they probably will do.*

In discourses of State I have often seen men make mistakes of judgment; because they set themselves to examine what this or that prince reasonably ought to do, and not what he is likely to do according to his nature and degree of understanding. He who would judge what, for example, the King of France will do, should have less regard to what a prudent man ought to do than to what may be expected from the nature and habit of a Frenchman.

*Do not let yourself be thrown out of play.* •

He who would be a man of action should not let himself be thrown out of the current of affairs, since out of one arises another, as well by the access which the first gives to the second, as by the reputation which being engaged in affairs brings you. To this also may be well applied the proverb—*Di cosa nasce cosa.* °

It has always been disputed how far the sinister precepts of policy, branded as Machiavellian, are to be charged to the character of the Great Florentine Secretary or to that of his age—in what degree the maxims stigmatised by that name were accepted or reprobated by the better-reputed authorities of those times. Machiavelli and Guicciardini were contemporary politicians, private correspondents, and personal friends, notwithstanding the most marked contrast of character, and thence of career. It may be affirmed on the evidence of the volumes before us that the latter had no disposition to countenance the cool atrocity of the wholesale recipes for extirpating enemies by foul or fair means, which the former generalised, with such shocking unconcern, from the prevalent practices of his age. In an elaborate criticism of Machiavelli's 'Discourses on Livy,' now first published in these volumes, Guicciardini remarks that extraordinary and violent political remedies always beyond measure please his author [Machiavelli]. It would be difficult to conceive the former looking on, as the latter seems to have done, in his mission from the Florentine Republic to Cæsar Borgia, at the preparations making for the immortally infamous surprise and slaughter of Sinigaglia. But it nevertheless appears, on the evidence of the 'Ricordi' before us, that one of the most respectable administrators and authors of his age, as Guicciardini certainly was, was considerably infected, albeit in a milder form, with what this age terms Machiavellism. The following sentences from the source above cited sufficiently establish that fact.

*Machiavellic maxim of politic falsehood.*

Make a practice of denying what you do not wish to be known, or affirming what you wish to be believed, since, whatever probabilities, or whatever certainties there may be to the contrary, a bold affirmative or negative often puts him who hears you off the scent.

*Machiavellic maxim of government.*

The government of States cannot be carried on according to conscience, because to anyone who considers their origin they have all been founded on violence—with the exception of republics in their own country, and not elsewhere. I do not except from this rule the

Emperor, and still less the priests, whose violence is double, as they coerce you at once with arms temporal and spiritual.

*Machiavellic maxim of affected reticence.*

A prince, or he who is engaged in great affairs, not only should keep secret things which it is well should not be known, but should besides caution himself and his ministers to keep silence on things even the least, and seemingly the least, important, except those which it is well *should be known*. Thus your acts and intentions not being known to those about you, or to your subjects, men stand ever in suspense and as it were amazed, and every little motion and step of yours is observed.

*Machiavellic maxim of fair public pretexts.*

One of the greatest good fortunes men can have is to have fair occasion to show that they have been moved by pure regard to the public weal in those things which they do to promote their own proper interest. It was that which made glorious the enterprises of the Catholic King which—while they were all entered on for his own grandeur or security—often seemed engaged in either for the extension of the Christian faith or for the defence of the Church.

*Machiavellic maxim of 'Bide your time.'*

A governor of nations should guard as much as possible against showing hatred to anyone, or taking vengeance of any displeasure done to him, since it brings too much odium on him to employ the public arm against private injuries. Let him only take patience and bide his time, since it is impossible that he should not frequently find occasion to effect the same end justifiably and without imputation of rancour.

*Machiavellic maxim to be observed by princes.*

Let princes take care not to lead their subjects into the next degree to liberty, since men naturally desire to be free, and no one ordinarily continues content with his position, but every one always seeks to advance beyond that in which he finds himself, and these appetites have more power with men in general than the memory of the goodfellowship that prince has shown them, or the benefits received at his hands.

The painstaking and patriotic editor of the volumes before us indulges largely, in his introductory chapters, in

elaborate parallels between the two last public men of Italy in the sixteenth century—Machiavelli and Guicciardini—who could properly be called so, as still speaking the language of Italian public sentiment. And very curious are some of the parallels he finds for them in ancient history. 'To Guicciardini,' he says, 'must be conceded the primacy of profound political intuition ; to Machiavelli subtle penetration into the *arcana imperii*, and vital forces of States, as well as into the no less intricate mysteries of the human heart. The former concentrated all his faculties upon one focus ; he might be entitled, by no fanciful analogy, the Cato of writers, as the latter might be designated as the Alcibiades.'

Neither Alcibiades nor Cato, so far as history tells of them, can well be conceived by any but a modern Italian imagination to have furnished parallels on any one point of character to Machiavelli and Guicciardini—unless it should be said that the loose morality of the Athenian Eupatrid might, in some measure, be attributed to the life and writings of the Florentine *popolano*. But Guicciardini and Cato ! Which Cato ? Not that one, at any rate, by whom the proud memorial was merited—

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

All the pains taken by our editor (who also edited, some years back, such of the official and other writings of Machiavelli as had remained unpublished) to wash perfectly white the political ethics of both are pains utterly thrown away. If he had urged that Machiavelli merely generalised his maxims of politics from an unexaggerated induction of the most successful strokes of State-craft and State-crime—that Guicciardini had no other course open to his ardour for action and advancement than to spend his last years in the service of bad masters, to whom he tendered as good counsel as they would take—he would have pleaded fair excuse for their shortcomings of the more elevated moral standards set up in later times ; though, in truth, later times have not always been entitled to write '*Anti-Machiavels*,' especially



when royal fingers held the pen. And the Parisian dispensers of European reputation, in the days of Frederick and Catherine, never flattered more grossly sovereigns whose ways of acquiring or extending power would assuredly have taxed Machiavellic cynicism to excuse them—even in Machiavelli's age—than by ascribing to them pure and exalted abhorrence of Machiavellic doctrine.

In point of style, the perfect unaffectedness and directness of thought and utterance certainly may be admitted to set the antique classic stamp on Machiavelli's writings. It is the *παρρησία* of old Greece transferred to the troubled and lurid dawn of modern Italy. For the rest, it must be acknowledged that the main scope of Machiavelli's public acts and writings was that of Italian independence by Italian arms under Italian leadership. Small blame to an Italian patriot who had seen the soil of Italy twice overrun and twice soaked in the blood of its sons by foreign invasion, if he gave precedence, as a first political necessity, to arms over laws—or rather was ready to affirm that the conditions of success in arms were the best criterion of national laws as suited to national needs of first urgency. The native military organisation which, with good beginnings of efficiency, his practical measures as well as theoretical tractates were framed to restore to Florence—nay, the despotic power which, in his writings, the most obnoxious to moral censure, he was content to offer to any Italian prince who would but take the lead in overthrowing *questo barbaro dominio*, might fairly be said to form parts of one system, conceived, with whatever alloy of moral obliquity or personal ambition, in one clearly-discerned and consistently-pursued public interest. It is indeed undeniable that in the 'Prince'—which is however, in this respect, no fair sample of his political writings at large—the sole moral of Machiavelli's doctrine of princely policy is, 'If you want to hold your own, or usurp what is not your own, at this day in Italy, you must not be too particular about observing the established distinctions between virtue and vice, good faith and ill faith, mercy and cruelty, &c., &c.; though you must take care, at the

same time, to keep as much credit as you can for those virtues which in politics you cannot always afford to exercise.' Now, this was only telling the great men of his age what they knew before, and what the great men of that age, and ages before and after, needed no rules to teach them. Nor was the policy of princely and diplomatic plots and perfidies exclusively Italian in those ages, however Lord Macaulay might please himself and his readers with his trenchant and telling contrasts between Northern rude valour and Southern polished artifice. The policy of the Borgias and the Medici might be more shameless in some traits, but could scarcely be more coolly or deliberately perfidious or, on occasion, murderous than the Tudor policy which fomented anarchy in Scotland, or the Spanish policy which kindled revolt in the Netherlands. Nor, at an earlier period, had a Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain, or a good King Louis XII. of France, anything to learn from Machiavellian doctrine in the line of perfidy; nay, it was precisely from the practices of such potentates, cismontane or transmontane, that Machiavelli deduced the maxims which shocked the world when set before it in the abstract, though in the concrete they had escaped especial censure, as tacitly understood necessities of king-craft or pope-craft. What was characteristic of Machiavelli was his vehement earnestness of purpose and straightforward explicitness of expression, not his perfidy. *That* was the sinister stamp of the whole State policy of the sixteenth century.

Guicciardini himself wrote of his Florentine compatriot, not that his public ends were ambiguous, but that his temper naturally ran to extremes in the choice of means. This was a reproach he himself was in no danger of incurring. It was not in his nature to take extreme views, nor, indeed, was it in his nature to postpone his personal success as a statesman to *any* general views whatever. All Guicciardini's thoughts and feelings, when unreservedly expressed, as in the 'Ricordi' before us, are imbued with a strong and pervading tinge of his own personality. His views of life and politics are always taken from the central point of his own family or individual.

interest—using the word 'interest,' however, not in any low or sordid sense. The habitually and naïvely self-regarding temper, generated too naturally by such times as those in which his lot was cast, is curiously illustrated in the following passage of his 'Ricordi':—

All cities, all States, all kingdoms are mortal ; everything either by nature or accident terminates and finishes some time or other. A citizen, therefore, who finds himself doomed to survive his country, need not so much grieve at its downfall and deplore its ill-fortune as his own, since that has happened to his country which necessarily had to happen ; but the special misfortune is his to whom it falls to be born in an age when that catastrophe had to take place.

The final extinction of Florentine liberties drew after it the shelving of Guicciardini the statesman—the making of Guicciardini the historian. He owed to his last year or two of retirement the reputation his name retains with posterity. When Duke Cosmo's jealous tyranny honoured by excluding from public trust and employment all whose political habits had been formed in less servile times, the discarded statesman had no 'Majesty's Opposition' to fall back upon—save the silent closet opposition of the historian, with posterity for audience. There is a sense of worth indicated in the worthy employment of years of enforced leisure ; that sense must be recognised in Guicciardini, as it must in Clarendon, whatever exceptions may be taken by criticism or party to the self-estimate of either.

Our motive for selecting a comparatively small portion of the voluminous publication before us for our special subject has been that these family, autobiographical, and political 'Ricordi' are the portion of that publication in which Guicciardini is, for the first time, presented *in undress* to posterity, divested of the *style académique* of his more elaborate writings. If the plain unvarnished self-portraiture of the man and statesman is to be found anywhere in his writings, it is to be found here. We have here direct from the fountain-head those judgments of the men and things of his day which are elsewhere diffused and diluted in studied sentences, or set speeches put in the mouths of leading cha-

acters. We have waded 'with honest anguish and an aching head' through the awful tedium of the formal pleadings and discourses, *pro* and *con*, in these ten volumes, on all those questions and transactions in which the great historian was implicated—as through a series, long drawn out, of 'Suasoriæ' and 'Controversiæ,' on the model of Seneca Rhetor.<sup>1</sup> These, with diplomatic and official despatches, swell out the bulk of the work, we think, disproportionately to their present value. An exception must be made in favour of the two books of Dialogues 'Del Reggimento di Firenze,' which will be found in the second volume, and which testify to the author's sincere public spirit, however dashed with self-seeking. The interlocutors of these imaginary conversations are four of the most eminent public men of the last period of Florentine freedom—Bernardo del Nero, Piero Capponi, Pagolantonio Soderini, and Piero Guicciardini, the father of our historian. Each of them supports his genuine character as speaker or listener, and the air of freedom still breathes through their unrestrained utterances. Bernardo del Nero in these Dialogues signalises that source of weakness and danger to Florence which Machiavelli devoted his best efforts to remedy. 'Our city,' says Bernardo, 'as every one knows, was once armed—once carried on all her military enterprises by aid of the arms of her own subjects—by aid of these won many victories and had many successes, which should have seemed to invite her rather to devote herself entirely to military exercises, than to disarm, as she has done, and make use in her wars of hired soldiers. The cause for this change must either have been the jealous exclusion from command by the people of the

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini's *full-dress* tendency to a certain formal prolixity has been quaintly illustrated by the preference expressed by Boccalini's *Lacedæmonian*, for condemnation to galley-rowing for life, building up between two walls, and finally flaying alive, rather than reading the interminable tall talk and little wars between Florence and Pisa.

'Instantissimamente supplicò che per tutti gl'anni della sua vita lo condannassero a remare in una galea, che lo murassero trà due mura, e che per misericordia fino lo scorticassero vivo; perche il legger quei Discorsi senza fine, quei Consigli tanto tediosi, quelle freddissime Concioni, fatte nella presa d'ogni vil colombaia, era crepacuore che superava tutti l'aculei Inglesi, &c.'—*Boccalini, Ragguagli di Purnasso, Cent. I. Rag. VI.*

nobles who had military rank and reputation [this was the main cause alleged by Machiavelli to have enfeebled Florence], or from the people addicting themselves too exclusively to arts and merchandise. However this may have been, the mode of making war by mercenaries has been most pernicious, and during the long period it has already prevailed in Florence has led her citizens into ways of life, and made them contract habits so contrary to martial enterprise, that now, if any youth talks of going to the wars, he becomes in a manner infamous.'

Another exception to the charge of tediousness which, not having the fear of Italian readers before our eyes, we have ventured to bring against good part of the 'stuffing' of the ten volumes before us, must be made in favour of the '*Storia Fiorentina*,' which fills the third volume, and which may be considered as forming a sequel (though written earlier) to Machiavelli's '*Storie Fiorentine*,' and an introduction to Guicciardini's great work, the famous (and tedious) '*Istoria d'Italia*.' Of the style of this hitherto unpublished prelude to his larger history it may be enough to say that, like that of his '*Ricordi*,' it has none of the conventional dignity of history. In this respect Guicciardini here stands in contrast with his later self, as arrayed in the ample academical robes of the classic historian. In the political doctrine deducible from his Florentine history he so far contrasts with Machiavelli that, while Guicciardini, as Signor Canestrini remarks, confined his desires to a better regulated government for Florence, and freedom for Italy, Machiavelli invoked the intervention of a Prince, an all-powerful Dictator, who, by whatever means—so they were efficacious—should succeed in the great enterprise of expelling the strangers who were tearing Italy in pieces. Guicciardini's historical style, in his 'first manner,' differs from Machiavelli's in that indescribable quality in which the prose of minds all-prosaic differs from the prose of poets. Guicciardini was an acknowledged master of prose—Machiavelli may rank with poets—and it would be difficult to find in the highest-wrought tragic descriptions of the historian such vivid images of the misery of the times

which saw the sack of Rome, as in the following six lines of Machiavelli's 'Capitolo dell' Ambizione.'

- Sempre son le lor facce orrende e scure,  
          A guisa d' uom, che sbigot-tito ammiri  
          Per nuovi danni, o subite paure.
- Dovunque le occhi tu rivolgi e giri,  
          Di lacrime la terra e sangue è preña ;
- E l' aria d' urli, singulti e sospiri.

We have given credit for painstaking as well as for patriotism to the experienced editor of these volumes. But there is one particular in which he fails to satisfy the fair and reasonable requirements of modern readers. He has neither favoured them with full tables of contents to each volume, nor with a general index to all the ten volumes. These are omissions too familiar in Italian as in German publications of bulk and weight. Signor Canestrini sends his readers voyaging through whole volumes without rudder or compass to find the passages he has thought worth noticing in his Preface. We have been tempted, in executing our critical function on this occasion, to wish that editorial delinquencies of this description could be visited with some of those severities of mediæval political justice so frequent in Florentine history. *Qualche tratto di fune* would be no more than condign punishment for the neglect of editors to provide readers with those mere mechanical facilities for *finding what they want* in voluminous works like these, which no French and no judicious English editor ever fails to furnish.

## II.

## GIORDANO BRUNO AND GALILEO.

1. *Jordano Bruno*. Par Christian Bartolmèss. 2 vols. Paris, 1846.
2. *Vita di Giordano Bruno da Nola*. Scritta da Domenico Berti. Firenze, 1868.
3. *Galilée, les Droits de la Science et la Méthode des Sciences Physiques*. Par Th. Henri Martin. Paris, 1868.
4. *Il Processo Originale di Galileo Galilei*. Pubblicato per la prima volta da Domenico Berti. Roma, 1876.
5. *Galileo Galilei und die Römische Curie. Nach den authentischen Quellen*. Von Karl von Gebler. Stuttgart, 1876.
6. *Les Pièces du Procès de Galilée. Précédées d'un Avant-propos*. Par Henri de l'Épinois. Rome—Paris, 1877.
7. *Die Acten des Galilei'schen Processes. Nach der Vaticanischen Handschrift herausgegeben*. Von Karl von Gebler. Stuttgart, 1877.<sup>1</sup>

No two characters in history invite a Plutarchian comparison and contrast more naturally than those of Giordano Bruno, the 'knight-errant of philosophy,' as he was nicknamed in his own time, and Galileo Galilei, the genuine martyr of exact science.

Bruno and Galileo were the first conspicuous champions of the Copernican or Modern Astronomy, and the former first awakened towards it the ominous attention of the Holy Roman Inquisition. The Nolan philosopher-errant had unluckily preceded the Pisan professor in the popular exposition of the Copernican system, and he purposely placed that system in the light necessarily most obnoxious to ecclesiastical prejudices, by including in his view of it the unhesitating assumption of a plurality of inhabited worlds, peopled similarly to our earth. From that assumption he explicitly drew those heretical inferences which were afterwards fastened gratuitously on Galileo. Neither Copernicus before

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, April 1878.

him, nor Galileo after him, hazarded any such speculations as to the manner in which the other planets of our system, or of other systems, might or might not be peopled. But Bruno revelled in them, and made them the main ground of his argument against the creed of Christendom and for the necessity of a new religion harmonising with the new astronomy. It was much as if Voltaire had preceded Newton, and had so treated astronomical questions as to create an inseparable association in the clerical and common mind between a revolution in science and a revolution in religion and morals.

Galileo has been accused by all the apologists of his ecclesiastical persecutors of having gratuitously mixed up questions of science with questions of religion; and his imputed invasion of a province, which he had no legitimate motive to meddle with, has been described as having provoked that Papal crusade against modern astronomy which has damned Urban VIII. and his Holy Office to everlasting fame.

Not a word of all this is true of Galileo. Every word of it is true of Giordano Bruno. Unlike as were the characters and careers of Bruno and Galileo—in every respect but irrepressible intellectual activity, however differently directed—it is difficult to avoid the impression that the destinies of the former may have very considerably and unhappily influenced those of the latter. The Roman Inquisition successively pounced on both, though not, it must be admitted, with equal excess of severity. It burned Bruno, and never certainly had it lighted on human fuel more manifestly predestined, in that age, to burning. It only intimidated Galileo into solemn and deliberate perjury, into abjuration of truths he had clearly demonstrated and continued to hold, which his persecutors perfectly well knew that he continued to hold, and therefore, by extorting verbal abjuration of them from a harassed and infirm old man, made themselves mainly responsible for the hollow and hypocritical performance of what can only be designated as a most impious and sacrilegious farce.

Giordano Bruno's is one of those names which, in the



course of centuries, have gathered round them a sort of smoky glory. If he had fallen upon another age and another country—instead of being burnt at Rome, he might have shone brightly, as a professor of transcendental philosophy, at Berlin or Munich. He might have lectured, like Schelling, on ‘The Absolute,’ and ‘The Point of Indifference between Extremes’—a position identical with the *coincidentia oppositorum* of Bruno—or, like Hegel, on ‘The Unity of Existence and Thought,’ and ‘The Perpetual Evolution of the Idea.’

It is mentioned amongst the multifarious mental occupations of the late Baron Bunsen, that he had studied Giordano Bruno with peculiar interest and with deep sympathy. ‘The work of Bartolmèss of Strasburg,’ he said, ‘gave me occasion of becoming more nearly acquainted with that strange, erratic, comet-like spirit, marked by genius, *but a Neapolitan*, whose life was but a fiery fragment.’<sup>1</sup>

A fiery fragment, literally consumed in fire at last. Not the less characteristic of that unparalleled era of intellectual renaissance in Italy, which commenced in classicism, was closed by Jesuitism; which was cradled in the Platonic academy founded at Florence by the first illustrious chiefs of the Medicean line, and was entombed in the Holy Office instituted at Rome by Pope Paul III.; which had for its first martyr of modern philosophy Giordano Bruno, for its second Galileo.

The character and career of Giordano Bruno furnish the most signal example of all that was irregular and anarchical in that immense intellectual as well as æsthetic movement, the transitory glory of the sixteenth century in Italy. The character and career of Galileo exemplify all that was genuinely scientific, and really religious in that movement. We should be disposed to regard the unbridled license on all subjects which so singularly and strangely distinguished Bruno as a natural reaction, on the one hand, against the complete self-prostration of intellect dogmatically demanded by the Church of Rome, and, on the other, as a natural

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Baron Bunsen*, vol. ii. p. 254.

product of the entire emancipation of intellect practically encouraged by the universities in those free disputations *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis* which were thrown open by time-honoured usage to all academic speakers and all hearers. It was only on submissive minds that monastic discipline produced its designed effects; the reaction therefrom, in restless and inquisitive spirits like Bruno's, could scarcely fail to drive them from implicit acceptance of unreasoned rule to indiscriminate revolt from all rule. What the Church had afterwards to condemn she may seem to have herself generated. Bruno was the natural child of Dominicism, as Voltaire of Jesuitism. He may be said to have anticipated the most 'advanced' solutions of all questions which he chose to consider open. And he chose to consider all questions open. He may be looked upon as the last of those stray philosophers, in quest of fame and of bread, who had formed, in the Middle Ages, a sort of international republic of letters, whereof all the universities of Europe were recognised as component parts, graduation in one of which opened all the rest to lectures and disputations *de omni re scibili* by their itinerant members.

But let us begin at the beginning of the wayward and erratic career of the first of those representatives of the nascent modern mind in Italy, whom M. Berti has made the subjects of his successive studies.

Whether Giordano Bruno, who was born about 1550 and baptised by the name of Philip—but, on entering a religious order, followed the usual ecclesiastical etiquette of giving himself a new name—was of high or low descent (he himself claimed the former) seems not very clearly ascertained. So much, however, is clear, that he was of rather poor parentage, and, during the whole course of his errant exercise of philosophy, he had to live upon his wits—on the money contributed by the auditors attracted to his disputations and lectures. He had donned the religious dress at the age of fifteen, in the Dominican convent at Naples, and before the expiration of his novitiate he had expressed himself slightly to a fellow-novice about a mystical manual, which he

found him reading, on the subject of the seven beatitudes of the Virgin. 'What!' he asked, 'would you not find the reading of the lives of the Holy Fathers more edifying?' Young Bruno had, moreover, cleared out his cell, by giving away all the images it contained of saints, male and female, keeping only a crucifix. Upon these indications the 'master of the novices' commenced formal proceedings against the boy heretic, but had the good sense or good feeling to drop them. Bruno's next outbreaking, however, in the like direction was followed by more serious consequences. Before he was eighteen, says his biographer, he had begun to doubt of the principal dogmas which the Church imposes on the belief of the faithful. Finally, after taking orders, at twenty-three he gave still fuller and more unbridled scope to his heterodox opinions. Thus, at each successive stage of outward ecclesiastical progression, he developed and disclosed an inward state of mind at variance with it. Proceedings were again taken against the young Giordano, this time by higher authority; and there could be no doubt about the peril of the position in which he had placed himself. He took flight from Naples, and found a temporary halting-place at the Dominican convent of the Minerva at Rome; but soon, finding that the charges brought against him at Naples had been duly forwarded to Rome, he took flight from thence also, throwing off his monastic habit, and went forth into the world, as the fairy tales say, to seek his fortune.

On escaping from Rome, our philosopher-errant had resumed his baptismal name of Philip, and, as we have already stated, had cast off his garb of Dominican monk. With his usual inconsistency of conduct, he very soon resumed that garb, but without any further attempt to re-enter the Order. In those times this was nothing new or unusual. Botta, the historian of Italy, states that there were then some forty thousand Italian monks living outside the walls and rules of their convents. On his arrival at Geneva, after experiments of living in Italy, which seem to have all failed, Bruno was counselled by a distinguished Italian refugee once more to divest himself of his monastic habits, these being quite

out of fashion in the city of Calvin. Accordingly he converted portions of them into hose, and his Italian fellow-refugees gave him a hat and cloak. Those refugees had, some years previously, espoused the creed of the Evangelical Church; and their recognised leader, who had first accosted Bruno on his arrival at Geneva, bore one of the highest patrician names of Naples. This was Galeazzo Caracciolo, Marquis of Vico, and nephew of Pope Paul IV., who, to the deep disgust of his family, had embraced the creed of Calvin.

But Bruno had shot far past Calvin and Beza in his views of a new theology. And, as he avowed afterwards in his examinations before the Inquisitions of Venice and Rome, he could neither adopt a religion the basis of which was faith without works, nor reconcile to his mind a scheme of Church government which empowered the State to punish with the sword all who dared to avow dissent from its doctrines. Formularies and confessions of faith were then the prevailing fashion, whether at Rome or Geneva. The Italian refugees had been compelled (much against their philosophical conscience, their leanings having been commonly Arian) to subscribe a rigidly Calvinistic confession. There was no rest or place for religious revolvers from Rome who would not restrict themselves within the rigid bounds of the theology of Geneva; and revolvers, like Bruno, from one theocracy could not bring themselves to acquiesce in another. ‘Lutheranism,’ observes our biographer, ‘was, in this respect, more to their minds than Calvinism.’ Bruno, in particular, very soon found that there was as much wood for burning heretics at Geneva as at Rome and Naples.

At Geneva our philosopher-errant was treading on ground which had shortly before been strewn with the ashes of Servetus. At Toulouse—where he obtained a professorship, notwithstanding his antecedents (which were perhaps unknown), and lectured on Aristotle’s three books ‘On the Soul’—he was again treading on ground shortly afterwards to be strewn with the ashes of Vanini. During two years and a half (for him an unusual interval of repose) there must

have been either a lull in the intolerant spirit of his audiences, or a pause in the indulgence of his own heretical impulses. It was during that interval that he held some conferences, which came to nothing, like those he afterwards held with the Papal nuncio at Paris, as to what means could be used to enable him to re-enter the Order he had quitted. But it was fated that poor Bruno's Dominican frock never should be put on again, save to be stripped off, as prelinfinary to its wearer being burned at the stake.

'Our Giordano,' says M. Berti, in relating his first sojourn and lectures in Paris, 'was the true type and ideal of the free professor of those times. In Toulouse, in Paris, in London, in Oxford, in Wittemberg, in Prague, in Zurich, in Frankfort, he took the professor's chair, and gave lectures, without seeking protection or favour in any quarter. He migrates from university to university, opens school against school, and when he encounters any opposition or obstacle he turns his steps elsewhere.' In his examination before the Venetian Inquisition, Bruno says of himself, 'I went to Paris, where I set to work lecturing to make myself known.' The substance of his teaching seems to have had for a main ingredient the Lullian art of memory, mixed up with the physical, metaphysical, and astronomical novelties which he never failed of introducing in all his lectures, and which never failed to produce scandal and to create a disturbance. On every subject his powers of improvisation carried his hearers by storm. 'He promised,' says his biographer, 'great things in vague and mysterious language, well calculated to excite curiosity and attention in his audience. Whatever in his utterances was not purposely obscure, was clear, fluent, and impassioned. Whatever the intrinsic value of his lectures, they gained him great fame in delivery.' Everyone would like to be shown a royal road to knowledge; and royalty itself, in the person of Henry III. of France, showed a desire, which seems to have been not less fleeting than his other caprices, to make acquaintance with this all-promising professor of occult science. Bruno, as he was seldom sparing of invectives on opponents, so failed not to repay in flattery

the capricious favours of a patron so far from respectable as the French King of the minions, by extolling him to the skies as 'the magnanimous, great, and potent prince, the echoes of whose fame extended to the ends of the earth.'

The first, and it might be said the last, real and substantial patronage (except that of the worthy Frankfort booksellers) ever obtained by poor Bruno was that which he enjoyed in the family of the French ambassador in London, Castelnau de Mauvissière, whose military and political Memoirs have made him known to posterity. About 1583 Bruno had brought royal letters of introduction to that important personage, whose house furnished him, for the first time, an easy and tranquil resting-place after all the troublous storms which had tossed his private state, and had rendered literary leisure unattainable, if not 'life unsweet'—for he seems to have rather liked living in hot water. All Bruno's best works were written on the banks of the Thames, under the hospitable roof and liberal protection of the French ambassador—the more truly liberal, as M. de Mauvissière was a devout Roman Catholic, and had no sort of sympathy with Bruno's free-thinking and heretical proclivities. There must have been, after all, something that attracted personal regard to our poor philosopher-errant, or he could not have made himself an acceptable inmate in the house of an experienced soldier and statesman, with an accomplished wife and a cultivated and amiable family. Bruno was excused from attending daily mass in the ambassador's house, on the plea that, for the present, he regarded himself as excommunicated; and he must certainly have restrained his polemical and profane sallies in the house of a man who emphatically disapproved the theological Conferences held about that time, in France and elsewhere, with the forlorn hope of putting an end to religious differences. Religion, said M. de Mauvissière, '*ne se peut bien entendre que par la foy et par humilité,*' and it was therefore not likely to be learned by disputation.

Bruno liked London little, with its mud, mobs, and 'prentices—Oxford less. If he presented himself to the notice of the heads of that royally endowed university in his

hose, already commemorated, stitched together out of his old Dominican habits, and in the charitably contributed hat and cloak which completed his outfit at Geneva, he must have made a figure anything rather than recommendatory to an honorary degree in the eyes of the magnificent dons of that day, whom he describes as follows :—

Men arrayed in long robes, attired in velvet, with hands most precious for the number of rings on their fingers, which look as if they could belong only to the richest of jewellers, and with manners as void of courtesy as a cowherd's.

To these maligned magnates, however, Bruno addressed a letter, through their Vice-Chancellor, in which he announced himself as teacher of 'a theology more exquisite, and a philosophy more refined, than any that had commonly been professed or delivered.' He added, in language not less vain-glorious, that he was 'the awakener of the slumbering, and the effectual tamer of stubborn and presumptuous ignorance.' He attained his object of getting the gates of the sanctuary of science on the banks of the Isis thrown open to him for the delivery of a course of lectures on the 'Immortality of the Soul' and the 'Quintuple Sphere.' His lectures obtained their usual success of scandal, and soon had to be closed. Bruno's report of Oxford students (*lucus a non lucendo*) was not more favourable than of the Oxford dons of his day.

'The scholars,' he says, 'were idle, ignorant, unmannered, undevout; occupied in no studies but drinking and duelling, *toasting* in alehouses and country inns, or graduating in the noble science of defence. In short, they took their ease everywhere, whether in lecture rooms or in taverns.'

The Oxford masters and scholars, whom Bruno encountered on the banks of the Isis, are contrasted with the English gentlemen he met on the banks of the Thames :—

Men loyal, frank, well-mannered, well versed in liberal studies, men who may bear comparison for *gentilezza* with the flower of the best educated Italians [of course, according to Bruno, the natives of his beloved Naples], reared under the softest skies, amidst the most smiling scenery and richest nature of the world.

The ladies of England came in for their share of honour from the Nolan philosopher, though not for that ardent homage which had lately been lavished on their gracious attractions by Erasmus. Such fervours were reserved by Bruno for Copernicus, Raymond Lully, and Albertus Magnus. Though he sometimes boasted of his *bonnes fortunes*, as of most other things, he had not much of the troubadour or votary of the Court of Love in his composition, and he betrayed some scorn of the Tuscan poet languishing for his Laura on the banks of the Sorgue. Yet he had lyrical tributes for some of those English ladies, 'the honour of the female sex, all-compact of celestial substance.' By Erasmus those *nymphæ divinis vultibus, blandæ, faciles*, had been much more warmly extolled, especially for a fashion now only observed on extraordinary and solemn occasions, or under the mistletoe.

'Always and everywhere,' wrote Erasmus, 'they receive you with kisses. They kiss you when you meet them, when you part with them, when you return. If you come back, the sweet kisses begin again; if they leave you, there is a fresh distribution of kisses. Whichever way you turn, you will find everything embellished by their tender commerce. O Faustus, if you had once tasted the delicate perfume of their presence, you would wish to travel—I do not say ten years, as Solon did—but all your life, and to travel always in England!'

Bruno's 'Wanderjahre' may be said to have comprised all the years of his active life—if a life can be called active which was passed wholly in talking and writing—in teaching Raymond Lully's boasted science of discoursing on all subjects without having studied any. It was the science of the old Athenian sophists all over again. Such a situation, with his natural independence of spirit and fiery temper, threw him only too frequently on the dire necessities of quackery. He had to blow his own trumpet wherever he went, mysteriously to adumbrate arcana to be more fully imparted only to the initiated, and to start paradoxes chiefly aimed at astonishing the ears of the groundlings. The worst fate that could have befallen his paradoxes would have been to have scanda-



lised nobody. 'What did the learned world say to your paradoxes?' asked the Vicar of Wakefield of George Primrose. 'Sir, the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes—nothing at all, Sir!' The learned world were less unkind to Giordano Bruno. The university-world especially said a good deal to his paradoxes, though not much to their advantage. Wherever he lectured, or wherever he challenged disputations, he could always boast at least of a success of scandal. He made successively Geneva, Paris, London, Oxford, Wittemberg, Helmstadt, Prague, Padua, and Venice, too hot to hold him.

Poor Giordano courted the favour of certainly a curious succession of patrons: Henry III. of France, who asked him whether the art of memory professed by him was an art practised by the aid of nature or of magic; Queen Elizabeth of England; Sir Philip Sidney; the Catholic University of Prague; the Protestant University of Wittemberg; the booksellers of Frankfort-on-the-Main, a city which he found friendly and hospitable, and where he would have done well to have stayed, had he been capable of staying quietly anywhere; and finally, a young patrician of Venice, Giovanni Mocenigo, who seems to have combined strong intellectual ambition with weak intellectual capacity, and with moral stamina still weaker. Having read one of Bruno's mysterious treatises on his occult science, this idle young nobleman could not be content without luring to his palace in Venice the possessor of all those boasted secrets of the Lullian art of memory which formed the charlatan part of poor Bruno's philosophical stock in trade. Teacher and pupil soon got tired of each other; the former failed to teach, and the latter to learn, an universal science which had little else than a merely chimerical existence. Bruno, besides, while he made a great mystery of his occult science, made no mystery at all of his open and scoffing heterodoxy. Mocenigo's conscience became alarmed by his confessor, when he exhorted his penitent—who was ready enough to obey the injunction—to denounce the teacher, of whom he was tired, to the Inquisition.

‘Even independently of his heresy of inhabited worlds innumerable,’ observes M. Berti, ‘sentence of death would have been passed upon Giordano Bruno. He came before the Holy Office charged with far graver crimes than Palæario, who was strangled and burned for denying the doctrine of Purgatory, disapproving burial in churches, satirising his fellow-monks, and attributing justification to faith alone. Giordano Bruno was condemned as an *apostate*, having deserted the order in which he had been consecrated priest—as *relapsed*, having been the subject of repeated procedures, without having been thereby reclaimed to a religious life. The relapsed, even when they had shown signs of repentance, were nevertheless delivered over to the secular arm, and were almost always sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; even such of them as had performed acts of penitence were sometimes condemned capitally. Bruno besides was chargeable with the heaviest of all crimes—that of impenitence—almost always punished with fire. The obstinate heretic, whom no office of Christian charity has availed to lead to conversion, shall not only [say the text-books on the subject] be given over to the secular arm, but burnt alive. It was added, “*Quando isti pertinaces vivo igne cremantur, eorum lingua alliganda est, ne, si libere loqui possint, astantes impiis blasphemis offendant.*”’<sup>1</sup>

Everything conspired with Bruno’s audacity of temper and recklessness of that conduct in life, which could alone have enabled him to steer safely through the seas of religious discord, to prepare for him the fate which he had voluntarily returned to his country to meet. He was an enthusiastic Platonist at a period when Aristotelianism was the sole saving faith in the eyes alike of dogmatic orthodoxy and alarmed sacerdotalism. ‘A Platonist in an Aristotelian atmosphere,’ as Mr. Leslie Stephen says of William Law, ‘can no more flourish than an Alpine plant transplanted to the Lowlands.’<sup>2</sup> The rampant Aristotelians of Bruno’s days would have no Platonic plants in their Lowlands; or, if any such came there, were presently minded to make firewood of them. ‘It will be remembered,’ says M. Bartolmèss, ‘under what circumstances Bruno’s death took place. It was in the midst of an epoch of reaction against Plato and Copernicus—an epoch when Cardinal

<sup>1</sup> *Arsenale o Pratica del Sant’ Offizio.*

<sup>2</sup> *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 158.

Bellarmino supplicated Clement VIII. not to tolerate the teaching of Platonic philosophy in the Church. 'That philosophy,' said the learned Cardinal, 'has too much analogy with Christianity not to excite fear lest some minds may be alienated from our religion and attach themselves to Platonism.'

The sixteenth century in Italy may be divided pretty equally into two halves; the first of which preserved the Platonic traditions of the Florentine Academy, and the second stiffened into exclusive Aristotelianism and intolerant orthodoxy. In the latter there was an ecclesiastical retrogression into mediæval Scholasticism, under the double influence of the new zeal for internal reform in the Church of Rome, and of the external pressure of Spanish preponderance over the Italian Governments, which, as in Spain itself, worked mainly through the established ecclesiastical machinery. At the opening of the century, the cultivated mind of Italy, in the highest places of Church and State, had become all philosophic and more than half heathen. Cardinals wrote plays, and patronised pictorial and poetic art on any rather than sacred subjects. Nay, Clement VII. and his Court sat out the performance of Machiavelli's 'Mandragola,' the last scene of which (the midnight soliloquy of a priestly pander) is the keenest and bitterest satire ever penned by the wit of man on sacerdotal hypocrisy or self-delusion at its highest and most comic pitch. All that was changed, however, as far, at least, as appearances went, when the Church had to set her house in order against Luther and Calvin.

'The anger of the elder Cato against the Greek philosophers was even exceeded,' says M. Bartolmèss, 'by the exasperation of the new censors against free thought. The degree of independence which had been enjoyed by Cusa and Pomponatio was refused to Campanella and Vanini. Cosmo III. of Florence prohibited the printing of the fine translation of Lucretius by Alexander Marchetti, as an impure manual of Epicureanism. What science demanded was to march unshackled, to live and speak unconstrained. The Church, on the other hand, dreading lest dogma should be sapped by science, naturally strove to suppress it. Thus arose a combat *à outrance* between two interests alike dear to man, but equally exasperated

against each other. But for that fatal conflict, to what an elevation might not Italian philosophy have attained! Accordingly, these two half-centuries exhibit a complete contrast. In the career of Bruno that contrast manifests itself from the most various sides. That imprudent speaker and writer carried on to the close of the century those traditions of free utterance which had enjoyed tolerance and even protection at its commencement.'

It must be admitted that Bruno used and abused to the utmost a 'liberty of prophesying,' the most moderate exercise of which had ceased to be safe in Italy. What Voltaire wrote of Vanini was equally true of Bruno: '*Il voyagea pour faire fortune et pour disputer; mais malheureusement la dispute est le chemin opposé à la fortune; on se fait autant d'ennemis irréconciliables qu'on trouve de savants ou de pédants contre lesquels on argumente.*'<sup>1</sup>

But Bruno's crowning imprudence was his habit of satire and invective on the Church to which he still considered himself as in some shape belonging, and which, unfortunately, still considered him as belonging to it, at least for penal animadversion. Bruno had not only been baptised a Catholic but ordained a priest, and he was thus doubly amenable to Church discipline, when, in his comedy, '*Il Candelaiio*,' he indulged his ribald humour on the most cherished objects of Italian popular veneration: '*Chi vuole agnus Dei, chi vuol granelli benedetti?*' &c., &c., together with a burlesque catalogue of Catholic relics of saints, which our Protestant decorum forbids our reprinting.

'Bruno,' says M. Bartolmèss, 'at Wittemberg could not but make his obeisance to the statue of Luther. But did he forget that Catholic Ingolstadt was but a few miles distant? His panegyric on Luther was meant for publication, and, without reflecting on the consequences, he seems to have striven to surpass, in expressions of contempt and hatred for the Papacy, the most passionate and the most unmeasured utterances of Luther himself. "Who is he?" demanded Bruno, "whose name I have hitherto passed in silence? The vicar of the tyrant of hell, at once fox and lion, armed with keys and sword, with fraud and force, hypocrisy and ferocity—infesting the universe with a superstitious worship and an ignorance worse than brutal!

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, article 'Athéisme,' sect. iii.

None dare d oppose themselves to that devouring beast when a new Alcides arose to restore this fallen age, this degraded Europe, to a purer and happier state.”

And it was this same Bruno who, in the last years of his life which he spent at liberty, proposed to lay his revised and corrected works at the feet of his Holiness Clement VIII., who, as he says, he has heard loves *li virtuosi*: to lay before him his case, and seek to obtain absolution at his hands for his past excesses, and permission to resume his clerical habits without returning under regular religious discipline!

It would be unjust to the memory of the unfortunate Nolan precursor of Galileo to leave the impression on those who have not read his writings (and who in England has?) of a mere itinerant, esurient, and irreverent, not to say scurrilous and blasphemous sophist. Such injustice (since Bayle) Giordano Bruno has not suffered from continental critics. Germany has given him no undistinguished place in her voluminous histories of philosophy, and German philosophy itself has owed some of its rapidly and incessantly dissolving views to his writings. Bruno's distinguishing faculty, as a child of the southern Italian sun, was imagination. That faculty, in the sixteenth century, in Italy, had matter to work upon unequalled in after times, but which, in Bruno's time, proved perilous stuff for philosophic handling. And Bruno's imagination was rather that of a poet than of a philosopher. He carried all sail and no ballast: little wonder if he made shipwreck. His sympathetic but discriminating biographer, M. Bartolmèss, draws his character in very impartial traits as follows:—

Endowed with a talent essentially spontaneous, Bruno seems to lose his power and be thrown off his balance on all occasions where patient and silent meditation is indispensable; where the main point is to ascertain, to verify, to demonstrate—not merely to affirm confidently and conclude precipitately. Though highly instructed, he was audacious rather than studious, speculative rather than observant; prone rather to draw on his own ideal stock and deal in *à priori* reasonings, than to collect data for well-grounded conclusions from

experience, and from these, with due circumspection, deduce rules and principles. He did not always care to confront the results of his speculations with the observable phenomena which compose the history of nature and society. He dreaded, or rather disdained, to apply to his own speculations that severe criticism, that unsparing revision, without which the most prolific brains produce in philosophy only ephemeral opinions. Science profits by the lights struck out—the sallies hazarded—by geniuses of that kind, but cannot be said to owe to them its substantial and permanent acquisitions. The most solid and real service such a genius as Bruno can render is to inflame the soul with a generous ardour for ideal truth.

It is a ncticeable coincidence that the same Doge of Venice, Pasquale Cicogna, who signed the decree, on the part of the Venetian Government, for the extradition of Giordano Bruno to that of Rome, had signed, a few months before, the appointment of Galileo Galilei as Professor of Mathematics in the University of Padua. Neither signature, at the time it was affixed, might seem of much moment; but the proceedings which were taken against Bruno by the Roman Inquisition paved the way for those afterwards taken by the same tribunal against Galileo. One and the same principle was involved in both cases: that principle was the assumed right of the Church to control the march of Science. And certainly never was science laid more open to censure by its imperfectly qualified representative than in the case of Bruno. So far as burning Bruno went, the Church proved its power. Rome proved her power a second time by condemning the Copernican doctrine in the unexceptionable shape in which that doctrine was presented by Galileo. But by so doing, she discredited for ever her authority in the domain of intellect by the despotic abuse of that authority at the dawn of an era which would no longer confound articles of faith with laws of science.

Giordano Bruno had been burnt at Rome in the sight of the multitude flocking to the Eternal City from all parts of Europe to celebrate the jubilee year 1600. Thirty-two years afterwards Galileo was forced from under the feeble protection of the young Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany before the Roman Holy Office, to answer for his stubborn adherence

to the discoveries of modern Astronomy, by which that tribunal told him he had made himself vehemently suspected of heresy. The treatment of Bruno, as we have already seen, had been, in a manner, provoked (if that could have justified it) by the multiplied indiscretions of the Nolan knight-errant of philosophy. Of the treatment of Galileo Rome herself has become ashamed.

For more than two centuries 'the starry Galileo, with his woes,' has engaged the world's sympathies; yet it is only within the last few years that proper pains have been taken to place before general readers the plain tale of his trials.

The most impartial review of the relations of Galileo with Rome is found in the pages of his thoroughly conscientious and liberal Roman Catholic biographer, Henri Martin, to whom we are also indebted for the fullest estimate of the scientific labours of his life. 'If Bacon,' says Sir David Brewster,<sup>1</sup> 'had never lived, the student of nature would have found in the writings and labours of Galileo not only the boasted principles of the inductive philosophy, but also their practical application to the highest efforts of invention and discovery.'

Galileo's great glory was his resolute rebellion from time-honoured tradition, and his signal inauguration of the spirit and methods of modern science.

'Galileo,' says M. Henri Martin, 'laid it down as a principle always to ascend from exact and mathematically precise observation of effects to positive knowledge of causes and laws. Long before 1637 [the date of Descartes' 'Discours de la Méthode'], long before 1620 [the date of Bacon's 'Novum Organon Scientiarum'], Galileo had introduced by precept and example this complete and definitive method of the physical sciences. He had, in so doing, to struggle against the modern Peripatetics, against the *à priori* method, handed down from Aristotle, in the study of nature. In his "Saggiatore" [Assayer], in his "Dialogues on the Two Principal Systems of the World," and more especially in his "Dialogues on the New Sciences"—his last and most finished work—Galileo, in demonstrating the legitimacy and efficacy of his method, lays special stress on that part of it which Bacon had neglected, and without which that method

<sup>1</sup> *Martyrs of Science.*

would have been impotent to regenerate the study of physical science. This indispensable part of the experimental observation of physical facts is *the measure of quantities*.

‘Galileo knew that all physical objects are *extended*, and consequently by their nature and essence *measurable*, though they may not always be measurable by the methods and instruments we possess; —that all physical phenomena take place in periods susceptible of measure—that physical phenomena must be reducible to movements, some perceptible, others inappreciable by our senses. As regarded all these phenomena, he held that the right method was to measure all that was measurable, and to endeavour to render measurable all that was not already directly so. All who have proceeded *à priori*, from Aristotle to Descartes downward, have arrived at results the falsity of which suffices to condemn their method. Neither ancients, indeed, nor moderns made any mistake about the first principles of pure mathematics, since those first principles, being necessary and evident of themselves, have nothing to fear from any correction in application. But those who have sought to arrive at the first truths of mechanics by the *à priori* instead of the inductive method, have always deceived themselves with regard to many of those truths.’

In a letter addressed, but not sent, to the Peripatetic professor, Fortunio Liceti, dictated by Galileo at the age of seventy-seven, the year before his death, he observed (and the observation comprises the whole substance of his own scientific teaching):—

If the true philosophy were that which is contained in the books of Aristotle, you would, in my mind, be the first philosopher in the world, since you seem to have every passage of that author at your fingers' ends. But I verily think that the book of philosophy is the book of Nature, a book which always lies open before our eyes.

The real cause of quarrel between Galileo and the authorities of his age was, that the latter sought their philosophy in books, while he sought his in facts. A blind faith in Aristotle deprived men of the use of their own eyes. Certain ultra-Aristotelians went the length of affirming that Galileo's telescopes were so constructed as to show things which in reality had no existence. He offered a reward of 10,000 scudi to anyone who could make such clever glasses as those. Some stubbornly refused to look through his



telescopes at all, assured as they were beforehand that they never, by their aid, should see anything that Aristotle had said a word about. And it was not only a few Peripatetic philosophers, unversed in astronomy, who talked in this way. Such language was repeated by the able astronomer Magini, Professor at Bologna, and at first, also, by the learned Father Clavio, who died at Rome in 1610, but died converted to the faith (by sight) of Jupiter's satellites, the phases of Venus, and the inequalities of the moon's surface. Cremonini at Padua, and Libri at Pisa, refused all credence to Galileo's discoveries, demonstrated as those discoveries were by his telescopes. Libri died at Pisa without having ceased to protest against Galileo's absurdities, or deigned to look through Galileo's telescopes; upon which the latter wrote (December 10, 1610) that, as the deceased professor would not look at Jupiter's satellites here, he might, perhaps, take a view of them in his way to heaven.

It has often been asked—it was asked, indeed, by Galileo himself—how it happened that a storm of imputations of constructive heresy burst on his head after having left unvisited that of the first great founder of modern astronomy, Copernicus. Galileo could not, as he said, anticipate that it would be believed at Rome—as it seemed to be believed by Monsignor Gherardini, Bishop of Fiesole—that the doctrine of the earth's motion had been first started by a living Florentine, not by a Polish canon who had been dead seventy years, whose book had been published by special desire of Cardinal Schomberg, and dedicated by express permission to Pope Paul III. But it is not difficult to discern the causes of the different reception, by the reigning philosophical and ecclesiastical authorities at successive epochs, of identically the same scientific truths. Copernicus lay already paralysed on his death-bed when his work was intrusted to Osiander for publication, and he was therefore in no condition to overrule the timid precautions which his above-named pupil thought requisite in order to avert the wrath of the orthodox theologians and Peripatetic philosophers of the day. Osiander's anonymous preface in no

manner expressed the mind of his master, who was convinced as firmly, as was afterwards his illustrious Florentine successor, of the solid foundation of his system in the facts of the natural universe, and who would probably have been no more disposed than Galileo was to handle it as a mere working hypothesis, which need not be received as true, or even probable, but as framed solely to facilitate the calculation of astronomical phenomena. The subterfuge was a childish one, but it passed muster with those childish minds of mature growth then occupying Papal or professorial chairs and pulpits. Had Copernicus lived to wield the powers of Galileo's telescope, he, instead of Galileo, might have stood forth the protagonist, and have suffered as the protomartyr, of modern astronomy. The conflict with the spiritual power, which Galileo did not court, but found forced on him, was the 'unshunned consequence' of the scientific revolution effected by aid of his telescopic discoveries. The question between the two world-systems, Ptolemaic and Copernican, as Herr von Gebler justly remarks, had hitherto been exclusively one for the schools. Neither the less known precursors of Copernicus nor Copernicus himself had ever ventured openly to declare war against the Aristotelian philosophy, or to overthrow, by the unanswerable evidence of observed facts, the hollow fabric of physical science founded on that philosophy.

They had fought with the same weapons as the Ptolemaic doctors—those of the school logic. They did not possess direct evidence of astronomical facts, as they did not yet possess the telescope. But Galileo, with his system of demonstration founded on ocular evidence of the actual facts of Nature, was too formidable an antagonist to obtain tolerance from the schoolmen. The Peripatetic philosophers had no armour of proof to parry the blows of arguments addressed to the understanding on the direct evidence of the senses; and their adherents accordingly, if they would not give up their cause as lost, must call in aid other allies than those of the schools. They caught accordingly at the readiest means within reach. To reinforce the tottering authority of Aristotle, they invoked the unassailable authority of Scripture.

We must not ascribe this mainly to mere party spirit, or mere

personal malevolence. The bulk of the learned class, which still adhered to the old-world system, and had hitherto carelessly regarded Copernicus, with his new theory apparently unsupported by visible proofs, as a mere dreaming speculator, now stood aghast at Galileo's telescopic discoveries, which apparently threatened to overthrow all that had hitherto been believed. The learned, and still more the half-learned, world of Italy felt the solid ground shaking beneath their feet, and the threatened downfall of Aristotle's authority of three thousand years must, it seemed to them, draw after it the overthrow from the very foundation of all that had hitherto been held as truth in physics, mathematics, philosophy, and religion.

If Galileo had been content with making a mere raree-show of his telescopes, or a mere lucrative trade in them, he might have been petted and patronised to the end of the chapter at Rome, as he had been at Venice and Florence. He need have incurred no risk of persecution for truths he might have forborne to enunciate. But he would have missed the main scope of his life, which was simply to demonstrate those truths. What Galileo's critics really make matter of reproach is his manly frankness and sincerity. Having a plain tale to tell, he saw no reason why he should not plainly tell it. Having no 'heretical pravity' to conceal, he too sanguinely anticipated that he could engage the Roman hierarchy in the pure interest of scientific truth.

It was ecclesiastical rather than philosophical favour that Galileo felt he had most need to conciliate. It was the opinion which might be formed at Rome of his views of the Copernican system about which he was most solicitous; for, should Rome prove hostile, he knew too well that it would be difficult or impossible for him to exercise with freedom the function of an expounder of those views in Italy.

'Belisario Vinta, secretary of the Grand Duke' [of Tuscany], says M. Berti, 'wrote to Galileo, that so soon as the truth of his speculations on the Medicean planets [the satellites of Jupiter, which Galileo had so named in compliment to his Tuscan patrons] should be confirmed at Rome, the new constitution of the universe might be said to be established for all the world, and would be assured of obtaining the concurrence of all mathematicians and all astrologers.'

This assent of Rome Galileo felt to be of such moment, that he was prepared to make every effort to obtain it. He assiduously cultivated friendly relations with the cardinals, the monsignori, the prelates. But the quarter where he chiefly aimed to conquer opinion was the Collegio Romano, as well because there were amongst its members not a few men well versed in science, as because it constituted a sort of theologico-philosophical tribunal.'

The prospects of success for the new science at the metropolis of Latin Christendom seemed at first promising.

'Would we form an idea,' says M. Berti, 'how Galileo was appreciated and courted at Rome, we must figure him to ourselves in the vigour of life, at the age of forty-seven, with ample forehead, grave countenance, expressive of profound thought, fine figure and very distinguished manners, clear, elegant, and pleasing, and at times imaginative and vivid in discourse. The letters of the time superabound in his praise. Cardinals, patricians, and other persons in authority, vied with each other for the honour of having him in their houses, and hearing him discourse. A choice society of men, eminent for learning or high public office, were in the habit of assembling round Cardinal Bandini in the palace of the Quirinal. In the gardens of that palace, which commanded a great part of the city of Rome, and the view from which extends over a vast horizon, Galileo, in the fine evenings of April, exhibited through his telescope the satellites of Jupiter, and discoursed on the subject of his discoveries. It seems that some of the Fathers of the Collegio Romano came also to these meetings; and by day Galileo, in these and other places, directed observation to the spots in the sun. Federico Cesi, the young president of the Academy of the Lincei [lynx-eyed], lavished on him the most affectionate tokens of esteem and friendship. Contemporary writers relate with admiration the sumptuous dinner given by Cesi to Galileo at his villa of Malvasia, on the summit of the Janiculum, not far from the gate of St. Pancrazio, and at which the most distinguished persons in Rome were present. Towards the end of dinner, Galileo having pointed his telescope in the direction of St. John Lateran, the guests were enabled to read the inscription over the portico, three [Italian] miles off, and then, turning the telescope to heaven, they descried to their full satisfaction the satellites of Jupiter, with other celestial marvels. On that occasion, Galileo, to satisfy the curiosity of the guests, took the telescope to pieces, and allowed every one at discretion to examine the construction, and to take the measure of the lenses.

'A number of eminent men in learning and science used to assemble

nightly at the Tuscan ambassador's, where Galileo at that time resided, to look through his telescope at Venus and the "tricorporal" Saturn. One evening, when the clouds interrupted their view of the stars, they began disputing, as their nightly wont was, on the subject of light. Galileo said to Lagalla, that he would let himself be immersed in ever so dark a dungeon, and kept there ever so long a time on bread and water, if only, on coming out, it were granted him to understand the nature of light.'

This conversation, and others of the like description, are recorded in contemporary narratives of the first sojourn of Galileo in the Eternal City, in 1611. He was to revisit it on four later occasions—in 1615, 1624, 1630, and 1633—the first three of these latter visits being voluntary, the last compulsory, on the peremptory and reiterated summons of Pope Urban VIII. to present himself in person for examination before the Holy Inquisition.

Amongst the figures which we find crossing the stage during Galileo's first visit to Rome, was that of Cardinal Bellarmine, then full of years and honours. On April 19, 1611, Bellarmine wrote to the Reverend Fathers of the Collegio Romano, to ask if in any manner there had been brought under their cognisance the celestial observations, which an able mathematician had been making by means of an instrument called *cannone* or *occhiale*, by which means he [Bellarmine] himself had seen some marvellous sights in the Moon and Venus. Clavio, a recent and zealous convert to Copernicanism, Griemberger, Oddo Malcotio, and Paolo Lembio, replied officially, on the 24th of the same month, that they had themselves verified all the celestial marvels to which his letter referred.

'Although,' says M. Berti, 'we are ignorant for what reason Bellarmine addressed that question to the College, we shall probably not be far from the truth in supposing that the reply requested in such solemn form, and in writing, was not asked of the College solely for his own information, but for that of his colleagues of the Inquisition.'

What, we may ask on our part, had Galileo come to Rome for, but to get the stamp of authority put by the Collegio Romano on his virtual adhesion to the Copernican system in

his *Nunzio Sidereo*? The 'able mathematician' had been desirous of bringing his new and strange views especially before that college, as containing other able mathematicians, who could speak from chairs of authority. And this end, which Galileo had expressly aimed at, he fully attained. The favourable answer returned by the Collegio Romano to the demand thus made of them was no sooner published than Galileo's friends at Rome hastened to make it known farther, exulting in the belief that the stamp of orthodoxy had now been set authentically upon the master's most startling astronomical innovations, and that they might henceforth freely discuss his discoveries and the questions raised by them. Monsignor Dini confidentially intimated to Cosimo Sassetti that the Jesuits were great friends of Galileo. The Tuscan 'Orator' [Ambassador] at Rome presented Galileo to the Pope [Paul V.], who received him most graciously, not suffering him to say a word before him in a kneeling posture. Encouraged by these favourable indications, and taking occasion from the opposition to his discoveries stirred up by some Perugian monks, Galileo addressed a letter to Monsignor Dini, not only exposing with all the force of logic, and all the keenness of sarcasm, the fallacy of the argumentations attempted by his monkish opponents, but putting in the clearest light the principles of criticism in their application to science. From Galileo's highly obnoxious proposition, that *the Earth was a planet*, his simple or subtle opponents sought to fasten on him the gratuitous inference that all the other planets must be inhabited by beings of our own species. It was then asked whether these had descended from Adam, and whether they had embarked with Noah.

The first open war on Galileo's astronomical innovations was declared by monkish ignorance. The irregular-regular monastic militia of Papacy were the first to beat the 'drum ecclesiastic,' and essay to rally round them the great army of blockheads in a new crusade against light and knowledge. On the fourth Sunday of Advent, 1614, Caccini, a Dominican monk, preached a sermon in the church of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, on the astronomical miracle of Joshua,

taking his text from the Vulgate—‘*Viri Galilæi, quid statis aspicientes in cælum?*’ This punning text was followed by a furious sermon against all mathematics, which the preacher declared were an invention of the devil, and against all mathematicians, who, he said, should be excluded from all Christian States. Father Maraffi, a Dominican friend and admirer of Galileo, immediately wrote to him to express his disgust at this abuse of the pulpit—the more so, he said, as its author was a brother of his own order, and he should have to share the responsibility of all the stupidities (*tutte le bestialità*) which might be, and were, committed by thirty or forty thousand monks.

Father Caccini, instead of being censured or punished, was invited to Rome, as master and bachelor at the convent of Santa Maria della Minerva; and another brother of the same order, Father Lorini, secretly wrote to the Roman Holy Office, not expressly naming Galileo, but denouncing the *Galileists*, who affirm that the earth moves and the sun stands still. Father Lorini declares that the Galileists therein assert an opinion visibly contrary on all points to Holy Scripture, that they trample under foot the entire philosophy of Aristotle, and vent a thousand impertinences only to show their wit. He concludes by quoting the sermon of Caccini against ‘the Galilæans,’ which was the sure way to get the Father summoned as a witness before the Holy Office—as he accordingly was, and added a quantity of second and third-hand hearsay, the greater part of which was too worthless to find favour even with an Inquisitorial tribunal, and the rest irrelevant to the charges in course of collection against Galileo by the underground agencies of the Holy Office of Rome.

M. Henri Martin here abruptly asks—‘What was it these Cardinals of the Inquisition really meant?’ Maffeo Barberino, Del Monte, Bellarmine, were well-wishers to Galileo personally. They meant, in a word, to spare the man while stifling the system. This was not, however, what Galileo wanted, or would willingly submit to. In letters to Monsignor Dini, he avowed that the earth’s double

movement was for him, as it had been for Copernicus, a serious and positive doctrine, not a mere hypothesis, which might be regarded as false or indifferent. In a justification of himself, drawn up by Galileo at the period before us, not for publicity, but for communication 'to some wise and just persons,' he asks—

What could be expected to be the consequence of an authoritative condemnation of the Copernican system? Such a condemnation would not convince men of learning and science, who do not feel themselves at liberty to believe the contrary of those truths of Nature which observation and experiment enable them, in a manner, to see with their eyes and touch with their hands. It would, therefore, be necessary to prohibit all study whatever of astronomical science—that is to say, all study of those works of Nature in which the power and wisdom of God display themselves with most magnificence.

It has been assumed in some quarters, and the assumption is endorsed by M. Martin, that Galileo's second visit to Rome (at the close of 1615) was not quite voluntary, as had been his first in 1611. According to these reports, he had been secretly summoned to present himself before the Inquisition. Galileo's own account, given to the Inquisitors themselves in 1633, as well as in all his letters to his friends, was, that this second visit, like his first, was made by him entirely of his own accord. Now, setting aside for the moment all reliance on Galileo's habitual frankness and veracity, is it credible that he should make a false statement on such a point to his judges, who had immediate means of checking it by referring to the records of their own office? It is not improbable, however, that he may have been *invited* by his friends in the congregation to come to Rome to defend his writings in person against the more serious of the charges which were brought against them. We may here remark that it was always on the provocation and challenge of his assailants that Galileo meddled at all with theological controversy. What excited their anger was, not that he was heterodox in theology, but that he warned off theology from ground which was not properly her domain. His counsels to Theology to leave Science unmolested were precisely such as might be



addressed, in our own age, by rational believers to irrational zealots. Unfortunately, the sincere or pretended zealots in the days of Galileo, when Aristotle was cited with such grotesque audacity in support of Scripture, were too strong for the small minority of enlightened students of Nature, whose religion was scientific, and whose science was religious.

Galileo's second visit to Rome appeared afterwards to have been the crisis of his fate, the turning-point of all his after-life from prosperous to adverse fortunes. The great mistake he made did not consist, as the late Sir David Brewster would have it, in any wanton disregard or defiance of 'the laws of the Church,' nor 'bold and inconsiderate expression of his opinions' through the channel of the press (the two documents, addressed, the one to Father Castelli, the other to the Dowager Grand Duchess of Tuscany, which gave his enemies the first handle taken against him, were not printed at all);—his great mistake was his too sanguine persuasion that he could get those who wielded the highest powers of the Church at that epoch to see that neither her laws nor her honest interests were concerned in the question whether the sun moved round the earth, or the earth round the sun. Such was Galileo's own intimate and sincere conviction; and it was his sublime confidence in the force of truth that inspired his efforts to bring round Popes and Cardinals, who had other objects in view, to share that conviction. Sir David Brewster, following Mallet Du-Pan, and other such untrustworthy authorities, and taking no note of the facts, which were not then in their entirety before the world, affirms that Galileo, to be safe, needed but to have abstained from turning a philosophical into a theological question; and that, had he concluded his 'system of the world' with the sage peroration of his apologist Campanella, and dedicated it to the Pope, it might have stood in the library of the Vatican beside the cherished, though equally heretical, volume of Copernicus.

'The cherished, though equally heretical, volume of Copernicus!' Why, the volume of Copernicus was put on the Roman Index by a decree dated March 5, 1616, and

remained on the Index till August 16, 1820 ! The doctrine contained in that work, of the sun being the centre, and the earth not being the centre of our system—the mobility of the latter and fixity of the former in that system—had been declared, in February 1616, by the Cardinals of the Roman Inquisition to be ‘absurd, heretical, and contrary to Holy Scripture.’ That was the position on which Rome took her stand at the epoch of Galileo’s second visit. No other ground could be assigned for any admonitory (not to say penal) procedure against Galileo, than the ground laid in the secret passing of that decree of the Inquisition, since no other offence could be imputed to him than that he had founded his theory, in his recently published Letters on the Spots in the Sun, on that of Copernicus. With similar secrecy, the decree of the Inquisition condemning the Copernican doctrine was communicated to Galileo by Cardinal Bellarmine, and a promise was exacted from him that he would, in future, neither *hold* nor teach that doctrine in any shape. Bellarmine himself, and Maffeo Barberini, afterwards Pope Urban VIII., were personal friends of Galileo; they had no sympathy with the ignorant or hypocritical zealotry of the Caccinis and Lorinis; and, at the time we are speaking of, they inspired the Inquisition with their own friendly dispositions, so far as regarded the person of the philosopher who had alarmed their orthodoxy. Accordingly, Galileo’s name was not even mentioned in its decree condemning Copernicus, and Cardinal Barberini afterwards, when Pope, in 1633, complained vehemently of ill-usage and ingratitude on the part of Galileo after he had helped him, as he said, out of his scrape in 1616. That Galileo could not be content to hold his tongue, petted and pensioned as he was both by a Pope and by a Grand Duke, was a mystery of iniquity and perversity that his too gracious Holiness could not have anticipated, and could not be expected to pardon.

Those who censure Galileo for failing to keep his secret promise to Bellarmine, seem to forget that, for sixteen or seventeen years, he kept as much of that promise as could

well be expected—that is to say, he forbore, though it was pain and grief to him, from further publications on the obnoxious and tabooed subject. It was not till his friend, Maffeo Barberini, had climbed to the highest place in the Roman hierarchy with a diplomatic dexterity only equalled by his autocratical arrogance when he had once reached it, that Galileo, by a second sanguine mistake, supposed he might give himself license to evade the inhibition which had secretly been laid on him at so great a distance of time. He had hastened to Rome, on the urgent advice of his friend Prince Cesi, the President of the Lyncean Academy, to congratulate Maffeo Barberini on his elevation to the Papal chair, and was received by the new Pope with an eager cordiality which might well inspire confidence. The Florentine philosopher, in his single-minded devotion to his main object in life, had not sufficiently studied the character of the man he had now to deal with. Everything depended with Urban on hitting his humour or caprice of the moment. ‘No Pope,’ says Ranke,<sup>1</sup> ‘ever raised such arrogant claims to personal respect.’ And nothing that he could deem disrespect to aught he had ever dictated was likely to be viewed by the new Pontiff in any other light than that of ‘contempt of court’—and of himself as the supreme head of that court—to which, and to whom, were to be submitted with implicit deference all matters bearing on its sovereign spiritual authority, whether directly or indirectly. Pope Urban had said to Cardinal Hohenzoller—who repeated to Galileo—that *the Church* had not condemned this system (the Copernican system), and that it should not be condemned as heretical, but only as rash; and he added that ‘there was no fear of anyone undertaking to prove that it must necessarily be true.’

In half-a-dozen audiences, which his Holiness had vouchsafed to grant Galileo, this very subject of the Copernican system had been discussed between them with perfect freedom; and it was natural to infer from the Pope’s expressions to Hohenzoller, that he would be disposed to tolerate the

<sup>1</sup> Ranke’s *History of the Popes*, vol. ii. p. 559.

like freedom of discussion in print, provided it were pushed to no positive or decisive conclusion. Upon that hint Galileo wrote and printed. Papal vengeance pursued him to the last hour of his life.

If Galileo misunderstood his patron, it is only charitable to believe that Urban understood no better his protégé, soon to become his victim. How, indeed, should they have understood each other? The personal characters and aims were as widely different as the personal positions of the two men who came thus suddenly and unexpectedly in collision. Galileo was solely intent on extending the empire of science—Urban on asserting the authority and enlarging the estates of the Church. While the former sought worldly means so far only as they were indispensable to obtain leisure for his researches, the latter mainly (that we may not say solely) made use of his spiritual power and prestige to promote the temporal aggrandisement of his See and his family, which had indeed become the all but exclusive object of the Popes for two centuries.

It has been supposed that Urban took personal offence at the imagined application to himself of the name of Simplicio, which Galileo had given to the Ptolemaic champion in his Dialogues on 'The Two Principal Systems of the World.' The other two interlocutors bore real names—those of the Florentine Salviati and the Venetian Sangredo, friends of Galileo, the former of whom personates the true (*i.e.* Copernican) philosopher in the discussion, and the latter intervenes as an umpire between the combatants. The Pope had, indeed, sycophants enough about him, capable of suggesting the injurious idea that the third Ptolemaic interlocutor was meant for himself. But he would have well deserved the name of Simplicio if he could really have believed this when he found leisure, which was probably not at first, to read the Dialogues. What was, however, true, and scarcely less calculated to exasperate his imperious Holiness, was that Galileo had put—and could not help putting—into the mouth of Simplicio arguments which Urban had held to himself in apology for the old astronomy. Galileo had, how-

ever, carefully guarded against seeming to give those arguments as Simplicio's, but made him cite them as those of 'a man of great learning and of high eminence.' Personal offence there was none in such a citation; but offence to Papal infallibility, and to the rules of good courtiership, there certainly was in the fact that, instead of accepting Urban's arguments as unanswerable, Galileo made his *Salviati* answer them. *Hinc illæ iræ*. Urban VIII. was no stiff Aristotelian. A Pope who had 'forced the songs and apophthegms of the Old and the New Testament into Horatian metres, the song of praise of the aged Simeon into Sapphic strophes,'<sup>1</sup> certainly was not chargeable with taking grave matters in too solemn earnest. And, it must be added, such matters, whether theological or philosophical, were those which formed the smallest portion of his mental concerns either before or after his elevation to the Papal chair. He was, while rising to power, above all an accomplished courtier and diplomatist; when he had reached its summit, he was the most imperious and unscrupulous of priestly princes. What was *true* he had little or no leisure to investigate; what was expedient he regarded solely from a secular point of view. Maffeo Barberini's stepping-stone to Papal sovereignty had been through the Court of France; his policy as Pope was framed on the model of Richelieu's, and was no less cynically indifferent to Catholic interests than that of his great master. It is impossible to credit him with any other species or semblance of zeal for the Church than that which consisted in flaunting her banners and parading her cause while fighting his own battles. 'His favourite notion,' says Ranke,<sup>2</sup> 'was that the States of the Church must be secured by fortifications and become formidable by their own arms.' This was the man whom Galileo had hoped to interest in scientific star-gazing, and to find open to conviction on points he had once determined, not by thought, but by will.

The Pope, it is said, did not immediately get a copy of

<sup>1</sup> Ranke, *History of the Popes*, vol. ii. p. 558.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Popes*, vol. ii. p. 554.

the new-published 'Dialogues,' which had been printed in Florence by a stroke of something like Machiavellic diplomacy, after the Roman censorship had been coaxed or cajoled into an *imprimatur*. It may be doubted whether he immediately found time to read them. But he saw at once, or was made to see by those round him, an affront to his authority in the attempt, in any shape, at any further discussion of a subject on which he considered Galileo, by his promise to Bellarmine, as having, in a manner, been bound over to keep the peace. His indignation, says M. Berti, was aroused so strongly, 'that the book and its author would both have been brought without delay before the Holy Office, if the intercession of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the urgent representations of his "Orator" at Rome, had not prevailed with Urban to nominate, in the first instance, a special commission to examine and report on the book before taking further proceedings.' But *le diable n'y perdait rien*. The Commission, of course carefully packed, made a report soon after to his Holiness, in which it accumulated all the matters of charge that could be brought against Galileo, as well for the act of publication of the obnoxious 'Dialogues,' as for the manner in which the questions broached therein were handled. On receiving this report, Urban lost no time in ordering the Inquisition of Florence to intimate his Holiness's command to Galileo to appear in person not later than the month of October (the rescript was issued in September) before the commissary-general of the Holy Office in Rome.

This imperious summons struck Galileo with consternation, and was highly displeasing to the young Grand Duke Ferdinand, who had just succeeded Galileo's old patron Cosmo. The Venetian Republic would have opposed a firm front to Rome on such a demand; but Ferdinand was young and irresolute, and the Duchess and Dowager Duchess had been thoroughly indoctrinated by their spiritual directors against all 'vain knowledge and false philosophy.' Galileo's infirm health had furnished excuse for delay in obeying the Papal mandate; but that mandate was repeated in still more

peremptory terms, and finally the Pope sent orders to the Inquisitor of Florence that, so soon as Galileo's physical condition permitted, he was to be brought *in irons* to Rome. Ferdinand wrote to him from Pisa on January 11, 1633, that it had become necessary for him to obey the Papal summons, but that he would place at his disposal one of the grand-ducal litters and a trustworthy guide, and would allow him to take up his residence at the Tuscan embassy in Rome. No Italian prince of that period, says Herr Gebler, would have acted otherwise. No one of them would have had the courage or independence to meet with a veto the Pope's demand for the extradition of an eminent subject. Venice alone would have acted on the axiom laid down by Paul Sarpi on the sovereign power of the State, and would have asserted that power against all sacerdotal pretensions to set that of the Church over it, and to execute ecclesiastical justice on the subject of an independent dominion.

There was a sad contrast between Galileo's first and last visit to Rome—the first a triumph, the last a torture, moral if not physical. There was a sad contrast, within a much briefer period, between the countenance turned towards him by Urban on his accession, and that of the same pontiff so soon averted in implacable wrath on the first umbrage given by the philosopher to the Pontiff's pride of power and of wisdom more than human.

The truth appears to be that Urban VIII., in the persistent animosity he showed against Galileo (while professing all the while to retain friendly sentiments towards him), was a good deal moved as well by the instigations of intolerant councillors as by the consciousness of having gone too far previously in the direction of tolerance. He had lavished *his most ostentatious patronage* on the Florentine philosopher. He had expressed his opinion that the Copernican system could not be condemned as heretical, but only as rash. And now he found the representative man of that rash system again rushing with redoubled rashness into print, substantially, though not avowedly, as its apologist.

In the mean time, those who had the Pope's ear had per-

suaed him that its propagation was in a high degree perilous to the Church. Urban VIII., like a priestly Louis XIV., was ready at any moment to exclaim ‘*L’Église, c’est moi !*’ Ranke states that, ‘if it was proposed to him to take counsel of the college, he replied that he understood more than all the cardinals put together.’<sup>1</sup> He had, however, precluded himself from proceeding by direct means against Galileo as an offender against the laws of the Church. He had himself conceded that the Copernican system could not be condemned as heretical. The very work, which and whose author he had now resolved to crush, had received the *imprimatur* of his own censors of the press at Rome. The only course open to him was to employ his *âmes damnées* of the Inquisition to say and do for him all that he deemed necessary to be said and done to intimidate Galileo and his Copernican sectaries into submission and silence. Accordingly, as we have seen, he summoned Galileo to appear before the Holy Office, but took care not to affix his Papal signature to any of their proceedings, though he presided in person at several of their sittings. No wonder if, among the ten men selected to do this dirty work for him, three—amongst them the Pope’s nephew, Francesco Barberini—withheld their signatures from the sentence. That sentence, as a specimen of the *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, is perhaps unparalleled even in Roman ecclesiastical Latin. It is given *in extenso* at page 143 of M. Berti’s Appendix, and sums up as follows:—

‘Dicimus, pronunciamus, judicamus et declaramus, te Galilæum supradictum, ob ea quæ deducta sunt in processu scripturæ, et quæ tu confessus es ut supra, *te ipsum reddidisse huic Sancto Officio vehementer suspectum de hæresi*, hoc est quod credideris et tenueris doctrinam falsam et contrariam Sacris ac Divinis Scripturis, Solem videlicet esse centrum orbis terræ, et eum non moveri ab Oriente ad Occidentem, et Terram moveri, nec esse centrum Mundi, et posse teneri ac defendi tanquam, probabilem opinionem aliquam, *postquam declarata ac definita fuerit contraria Sacræ Scripturæ*; et consequenter te incurrisse omnes censuras et penas a Sacris Canonibus et aliis Constitutionibus generalibus et particularibus contra hujusmodi delinquentes statutas et promulgatas.’

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Popes*, vol. ii. p. 556.



It is characteristic of Inquisitorial justice in all ages, that 'vehement suspicion of heresy' is here regarded as equivalent to proof of heresy; and that Galileo, having been stated to have come under that suspicion, should be assumed to have 'incurred all the censures and punishments appointed and proclaimed against such delinquents.' Without dwelling on that assumption, *by whom*, may we ask, had the Copernican theory been declared and defined to be contrary to 'Holy Scripture?' By the Pope, speaking *ex cathedrâ* for the Church Universal? No such thing; but by the Congregation of the Inquisition—a body incompetent to declare or define anything of the sort.

It was Pope Urban throughout that urged the Inquisition to exercise its utmost rigour against Galileo. He was not more intent on seizing with the secular arms of horse, foot, and artillery the territories of his neighbours to enrich his nephews, than on stretching his spiritual authority to the utmost to frighten or coerce a defenceless philosopher into restoring the sun's motion and arresting the earth's—so far as words could do it. Much has been said, with something less than justice, about the abjectness of Galileo's abjuration. His Roman Catholic biographer, M. Henri Martin, handles the matter, in our judgment, more equitably. We make no apology for rather a long extract:—

The submissive language and attitude of Galileo before the Inquisition were enjoined upon him by his feeble protector, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and were likewise counselled by all his friends, of whom we have letters. Niccolini, the friendly Tuscan ambassador at Rome, relates in his correspondence with his court the prolonged and deep dejection in which Galileo was plunged, after reluctantly giving his promise to comply with these counsels. We may add that in the submissive attitude he assumed throughout his trial, he conformed also to the counsels of the Venetian Fra Micanzio, the friend and successor of Fra Paolo Sarpi. Such was the pliability of the firmest characters in Italy of the seventeenth century.

Far from imagining with *Sir Brewster* that the danger for Galileo lay in submission, we must not suppose that he yielded to a vain fear. He knew how two condemned heretics had been treated at Rome, the one only thirty-two years, the other only eight years before his trial.

He must have had in recollection Giordano Bruno, burned alive at Rome under Clement VIII. in 1600, and Marco Antonio de Dominis, who died in imprisonment before trial in the Castle of St. Angelo, but was condemned after death, and whose exhumed body was burned with his writings at Rome under Urban VIII., in 1624. Galileo was no heretic like Bruno, an ex-Dominican monk, who had openly renounced Catholicism at Geneva, and had publicly taught not only the system of Copernicus and the plurality of worlds inhabited by men, but the doctrine of metempsychosis and a sort of pantheism. Galileo was not a relapsed heretic like the learned mathematician and physical philosopher Dominis, ex-Archbishop of Spalatro, and afterwards Protestant canon at Windsor, who returned to the Catholic Church, but was again accused of Protestant doctrine. Nevertheless, the sentence passed in 1633 against Galileo, without exactly giving him, as a ground of condemnation, the designation of a relapsed heretic, implied that designation in the preamble of the sentence and in the act of abjuration; so as, in effect, to stigmatise Galileo's doctrine as a heresy, declared such in 1616, and Galileo himself by consequence as a heretic, who had received a secret personal warning in 1616, had relapsed afterwards into heresy in 1632, and was now pardoned solely on condition of abjuration and penance. If Galileo had refused to abjure a doctrine thus described as heretical, he would have had to fear that the designation of relapsed and impenitent heretic would have been applied in his case as in that of Bruno, drawing like consequences after it. I am convinced, indeed, that he would not have undergone the last punishment for his pretended crime; neither Urban VIII. nor his inquisitors would have gone quite that length. But he would have been shut up for all the rest of his life, as a dangerous and incorrigible innovator, in the prisons of the Holy Office.

The illusory pardon vouchsafed by Rome to Galileo, in consideration of his not less illusory abjuration, is described in all its detail of petty and minute vexations in the several works before us, each of which is, in its own way, worth study. What Rome did to Galileo is now before the world in its minutest circumstances. Let her have full credit for what, by special grace and favour, she left undone. An infirm old man of seventy, stricken with grievous maladies, whose labours and discoveries had done honour to Italy in every realm of Europe, was neither burned at the stake, nor thrown into the dungeons of the Holy Office, nor stretched on its rack. In other respects, the sentence of condemnation

passed on Galileo formed no exception to the rule again laid down in principle by the Infallible Head of the Infallible Church in the age we live in,<sup>1</sup> and only not now carried into execution by its secular arm, because the secular arm is no longer now at Rome's disposal.

The nine years of life which remained for Galileo after his abjuration were employed to good purpose in bringing out his '*Dialoghi delle Nuove Scienze*,' which has been generally considered, as it was by himself, his *chef-d'œuvre*, though keeping entirely off the vexed question of his great astronomical discoveries. Watched as he was by all the eyes of Papal espionage till his own were closed in total blindness, Galileo contrived to effect the republication, in Holland and Germany, of those condemned discoveries which Rome had done her best, or worst, to suppress, but of which she only, for the moment, succeeded in robbing Italy of the full honour, though to Italy belonged the genius that made them. Galileo lived to his last hour a Martyr, that is to say, an unceasing and unresting Witness to Science; and Rome may be thankful that he did not directly die her martyr. But she brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, pursued him to death, and after death, with the vindictive vigilance of her Inquisitorial emissaries; and only did not, because she could not arrest, while life remained, the workings of that indomitable and irrepressible intellect.

We cannot conclude without some brief notice of the two most recent transcripts of the Vatican MSS. containing the successive procedures in the case of Galileo, which have been published since the preceding pages were written. These transcripts were made in the course of last year, almost simultaneously, but without concert—apparently, indeed, without the one writer having distinct knowledge of what the other was doing—by M. Henri de l'Épinois, who was first in the field in the independent investigation of these documents, so far back as 1867, and by Herr von Geb-

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing observations were written before the accession of the present Pope, and refer, of course, to the too notorious Encyclicals of his predecessor.

ler, to whose previous publication, entitled 'Galileo Galilei und die Römische Curie,' we have been indebted for much valuable material on the subject of our present review.

The recent history of these Vatican MSS. is curious. Early in the present century, during the French occupation of Rome under the first Napoleon, they were abstracted from the secret archives of the Vatican, and brought to Paris, where they remained (to borrow M. Berti's ultra-classic style) 'for eight lustres and more'—that is to say, for nearly half a century. The French autocrat at first intended to print them, but he either changed his mind from some motive connected with the tangled web of his policy towards the Holy See, or else he adopted the opinion expressed by the historian Denina, that they contained nothing worth printing. After the Bourbon Restoration, Pius VII. commissioned the late Monsignor Marini to reclaim these MSS. as Papal property; but he had to return to Rome empty-handed, and without having been even able to ascertain where the documents were deposited. Under Louis-Philippe, and just after the accession of Pius IX. to the Papal chair, a more skilful or more successful diplomatist, Pellegrino Rossi, who enjoyed equally the favour of the courts of Rome and of France, and whose assassination, some two years afterwards, cast so deep a stain on the ephemeral Roman Republic of 1848, procured the restoration of the precious MSS. to the Vatican archives. The first use made of the restored documents in the way of publication (their publication having been promised to the French Government) was made by the late Monsignor Marini, their custodian, who produced, in 1850, a little brochure, entitled 'Galileo e l' Inquisizione Romana. Memorie storico-critiche.' This was a piece of mere *ex-parte* pleading, composed for the purpose of showing that the Holy Office had condemned—not the Copernican doctrine—but the theological notions which Galileo had mixed up with its exposition. Such an assertion was a rare specimen of effrontery, the documents being in their falsifier's hands, and staring him in the face. If Monsignor Marini supposed that the secret archives of the Vatican

would never be opened to any one more studious of the truth of history than himself, he reckoned without his host. The Papal Government subsequently allowed access to those archives, first to a French author, M. Henri de l'Épinois, who published at Paris, in 1867, in the '*Revue des questions historiques*,' an essay entitled '*Galiléo, son procès, sa condamnation, d'après des documents inédits*,' secondly to M. Berti, whom Father Theiner, the late learned and liberal archivist of the Vatican, allowed to consult and take copies of them. A third restorer of the text of the proceedings against Galileo is Herr von Gebler, who, like M. de l'Épinois and M. Berti, has been allowed free access to the MSS.

The three writers above cited, who have now placed before the public each his own transcript of the official records of this too famous procedure, have played the part of inquisitors over each other, in a sort of emulation of the Holy Office. M. Berti took the lead by criticising the first partial reproduction of the original documents which had been made in the earlier essay of M. de l'Épinois. M. de l'Épinois rejoined by acknowledging and accounting for the imperfections of his own previous publication, and supplying a fresh transcript of those documents, with critical comments on the errors and inaccuracies of M. Berti's edition. And Herr von Gebler brings out a third, with corrections of both the others. One result, at least, of the researches of all three critical inspectors and copyists, who have taken so much pains to be right, and to set their rivals right where wrong, will be to render impossible the exercise of any pious frauds for the future in disguising or distorting any of the main facts of the case. As to the manner in which those facts should be regarded, modern opinion has unanimously pronounced already; and M. de l'Épinois, who, following after M. Henri Martin, labours to reconcile the fair and full exposition of the case of Galileo with the vindication of the character of his Church against the '*attacks of ignorance*,' adduces no facts or arguments of any force to alter that opinion.

## III.

## JONATHAN SWIFT.

*The Life of Jonathan Swift.* By John Forster. Volume the First. 1667-1711. London, 1875.<sup>1</sup>

OUR old friend Christopher North, in one of his convivial sallies, altogether disclaimed being 'that faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw,' and claimed, on the contrary, to be a faulty monster seen by all the world. 'That faulty monster Swift will now, we hope, be shown to all the world in his true dimensions, though he cannot be washed exactly white. Mr. Forster has some more than ordinary qualifications for the task he has set himself. He is not 'suspect' of Toryism, nor consumed with the zeal of retrospective Whiggism to the pitch of regarding apostacy from Godolphin to Harley, in the days of Queen Anne, as deserving a political *auto da fe* in those of Queen Victoria. He has spared neither time nor pains in research of documents and materials from all quarters; and brings in his present volume much fresh information on Swift's career and character.<sup>2</sup> And finally, he has that 'heartily liking' and 'generous admiration' for his subject which he justly attributes to his great precursor Scott, and which are indispensably requisite to render biography a labour of love. That Swift was, in his sane and manly years, loveable, seems sufficiently proved by the fact that he was more or less loved, or liked, by every woman of intelligence and every man of genius with whom

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, January 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Forster's death unfortunately followed soon after the publication of the first volume of his *Life of Swift*.

he came in personal contact and intercourse. He was loved in tragic earnest by poor Esther Johnson and poor Hester Vanhomrigh. He was loved by Pope, Gay, Steele, Congreve, Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Addison; and lastly, and posthumously, his memory is loved by Mr. Forster.<sup>1</sup>

Independently of 'evil times and evil tongues,' the sources of Swift's doubtful reputation, from his own days to ours, may be said to have been, in a manner, identical with those of his glory. His 'Tale of a Tub' was a declaration of war against half Christendom, and his 'Gulliver's Travels' little short of an indictment against all mankind. His political trophies were the depopularisation of Marlborough, the preparation of the public mind for the Peace of Utrecht, and the exasperation of Irish patriotism against English halfpence. A new Prometheus, he must be owned to have brought upon earth more heat than light, and his final misanthropy purveyed his own vultures for his own heart in exile.<sup>2</sup> It is, indeed, a passion which, if it does not begin in madness, almost certainly ends there.

The late great French critic, Sainte-Beuve, laid down, with immediate reference to Chateaubriand, the following canon of criticism, which is not less applicable to our present subject:—

For me, literary production is not distinct—is, at any rate, not separable—from the producer, the man himself, and his individual organisation. I may find pleasure in a work, but it is difficult for

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Courtenay, in his *Memoirs of Sir William Temple* (vol. ii. p. 243), drew from very narrow premisses very broad conclusions as to the general *unpopularity* of Swift's manners with women. 'Of the offensive manners of Swift,' he says, 'and his consequent unpopularity with the ladies of the families in which he was intimate' [we will trouble any one to be *intimate* in families where he is unpopular with the ladies!], 'we can speak upon the authority of a daughter of his friend, the first Lord Bathurst: this lady was particularly disgusted with his habit of swearing.'

The occasional *brusquerie* and eccentricity of Swift's manners, especially in his later years, is not denied in any quarter. He could make himself disagreeable, but he could make himself exceedingly agreeable, both to men and to women. See Mr. Forster's volume, p. 226, and in other places, for the extraordinary social charm possessed by Swift in his better years.

<sup>2</sup> Swift always regarded his Dublin deanery as an exile, and always refused to regard Ireland as his country, merely because he was 'dropped' there.

me to pronounce a judgment on it, independently of all knowledge of the writer. I should be disposed to say—Such as the tree, such the fruit.

In order to know a man—that is to say, to know something more about him than pure spirit—one cannot go to work in too many ways, or from too many sides. Till one has asked and answered to oneself a certain number of questions about an author, one is never sure of having completely seized his character. What were his religious views? How was he affected by natural scenery? *What was his behaviour towards women?—what in money matters?* Was he rich? was he poor? What was his regimen, his mode of living? Finally, *what was his vice or weakness?* since every man has one. None of the answers to these questions are immaterial in forming a judgment of an author, or even of his book,—unless, indeed, that book is a treatise of pure geometry.

In no instance more distinctly than in that of our present subject is the character of the author traceable, in its main lines, to the character of the man. It might be said of Jonathan Swift as of John Bunyan—whom, by the way, he prized more highly than theologians of higher pretensions—that it was because he was such a man as he was he wrote as he did. What set the stamp of permanence on the writings of both was no study of form, no care of composition, but downright force of expression prompted by strength of purpose. Bunyan became a great author without knowing it, because he had a faith to propagate. Swift became a great author without caring about it, because he had passions to wreak, ambitions to gratify, and insights into life, character, and opinion to bring out in forms which, however fantastic, however frequently repulsive, have won for themselves a permanent place in the modern mind, which they will no more lose with any generation of intelligent readers than the world will ‘willingly let die’ Pantagruel’s history, or the Pilgrim’s Progress.

In applying to Swift Sainte-Beuve’s personal and, as he conceived it, physiological method of criticism, it would be necessary to start with the subject from birth, or even before it. A posthumous child, born of a mother labouring under a load of anxieties, much that was otherwise inexplicably morbid in Swift may be traceable to congenital sources, and



the painfully dependent circumstances of his boyhood and youth.

His brief autobiography, reproduced in Mr. Forster's first chapter, and which stops at the epoch of Swift's final settlement in Ireland, begins by stating that the family of the Swifts are ancient in Yorkshire. After commemorating one or two notable members of that family, the writer comes to his paternal grandfather, Thomas Swift, whose services and sufferings in the cause of the First Charles obtained recognition and promise of preferment from the Second, then in exile, 'if ever God should restore him.' Thomas Swift's life ended, however, before Charles's exile, and 'Mr. Swift's merit,' observes his grandson, 'died with him.'

His father's marriage is recorded as follows by Swift, with a curious and characteristic mixture of pride in his mother's remote ancestry, and regret for his father's 'indiscreet' marriage:—.

He married Mrs. Abigail Erick, of Leicestershire, descended from the most ancient family of the Ericks, who derive their lineage from Erick the forester, a great commander, who raised an army to oppose the invasion of William the Conqueror . . . This marriage was on both sides very indiscreet, for his wife brought her husband little or no fortune; and his death happening suddenly, before he could make a sufficient provision for his family, his son, not then born [Swift himself], has often been heard to say, that he felt the consequences of that marriage, not only through the whole course of his education, but during the greatest part of his life.

Swift's only prosperous relative settled in Ireland was an uncle, Godwin Swift, to whom, says Mr. Forster, as the acknowledged head of the family, Jonathan's [his father's] widow had turned naturally in her trouble. With exception of a small annuity of twenty pounds, which her husband had been enabled to purchase at their marriage, she was wholly dependent on this supposed wealthy relative, who took on himself the charge of the young Jonathan's schooling, and defrayed it in what seemed a niggard and grudging manner, which was never forgiven by the distinguished object of his reluctant bounty. Four marriages, however, had provided

Uncle Godwin with fifteen children, and he left at his death a crippled estate, altogether inadequate for his survivors.

Swift says of himself that

By the ill-treatment of his nearest relations [meaning chiefly Uncle Godwin], he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirit, that he too much neglected his academic studies, for some parts of which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself to reading history and poetry; so that when the time came for taking his degree of Bachelor of Arts, although he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dullness and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted, in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college [Trinity College, Dublin] *speciali gratiâ*, on the 15th February, 1685, with four more on the same footing.

‘These autobiographical records,’ observes Mr. Forster, ‘show not only the sense of worldly disadvantage that even during childhood and at school marred his enjoyment and chilled exertion, but the temperament which at a later time fitted him as little to receive obligation as to endure dependence.’

Dr. Barrett [we still quote Mr. Forster] taxes all his energies to establish that after his bachelorship Swift became reckless of hall or lecture-room, violent and quarrelsome, a stranger to the chapel, a loungee in the town, and for ever falling under fine or censure. Walter Scott not inaptly remembered, when he came to this picture by Barrett, how Johnson described his Oxford life to Boswell. ‘Ah, sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness that they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority.’ But there was a written sentence of Johnson more nobly applicable both to Swift and to himself, when, in the life of the Dean, he said, that the years of labour by which studies had been retrieved which were alleged to have been recklessly or negligently lost, ‘afforded useful admonition and powerful encouragement to men whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.’

Swift’s mother, notwithstanding the ‘indiscreet’ marriage, at which the black drop in her son’s blood, when tinging his thoughts, made him repine chiefly because it had brought

himself into being, appears always to have been regarded by that son with affection and admiration. 'Character, humour, uprightness, and independence,' says Mr. Forster, 'are in all the traditions respecting her.' During her life, which lasted twenty-two years after he left college, Swift rarely missed visiting her once a year at least at Leicester, where she had finally fixed her home—travelling by waggon or on foot in his poorer, by coach in his more opulent days. In his earlier journeys to and from that place—when, seeing written over a door 'Lodgings for a penny,' he would hire a bed, giving an additional sixpence for clean sheets—he had opportunities of observing the ways and speech of the common people, which must have much helped to form his popular style and turn of thought.

'Swift,' says Mr. Forster, 'was little more than two months past his twenty-first birthday when Tyrconnel let loose the Celtic population on the English settlers in Dublin; and quitting the college with a crowd of other fugitives, he found his way to his mother's house in England.' His visit to Leicester on this occasion lasted some months, and his watchful parent became alarmed on his account 'because of the daughters of Heth'—one Betty Jones in particular, who afterwards married 'a rogue of an innkeeper' at Loughborough.

'Hardly had he escaped this Betty Jones,' says Mr. Forster, 'when there began to be talk of another; and long before the "some months" passed which he describes as the duration of this visit to Leicester, his mother must have been convinced of the truth of what her son already had been told by "a person of great honour in Ireland," who was "pleased to stoop so low as to look into my mind; and used to tell me that it was like a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if I would not give it employment."'

Under these circumstances, it was his mother's suggestion that he should apply to Sir William Temple. Lady Temple was a relation of hers, and was still living when Swift's application for admission to Sir William Temple's house and patronage was made and received favourably.

‘He joined,’ says Mr. Forster, ‘the retired statesman at Moor Park, near Farnham, before the close of 1689, and continued with him, not without intervals of absence, until just before Lady Temple’s death, in 1694. These five years are to be regarded as the first residence with Temple.’

Swift’s great intellectual development, especially in the direction of politics, may be dated from the period of his two protracted sojourns under the roof of a veteran statesman of such experience and capacity as Temple. We ourselves have no doubt that Swift’s moral character, so far as still pliable, must also have been improved by having set before him so accomplished a model of qualities which he could not but respect, albeit he could not emulate—his own natural temper being not less restless and ambitious than Temple’s was the reverse.

If the pen of Swift, at a later period, inflicted the first defeat of Marlborough in the battle-field of English public opinion; if the pen of Swift first taught Ireland to ‘adventure resurrection,’ and commenced and carried to a triumphant issue the first successful Irish agitation, the school in which he learned to wield such a pen was Temple’s house at Moor Park.

‘Every judicious reader,’ says Lord Macaulay, ‘must be struck by the peculiarities which distinguish Swift’s political tracts from all similar works produced by mere men of letters. Let any person compare, for example, the “Conduct of the Allies,” or the “Letter to the October Club,” with Johnson’s “False Alarm,” or “Taxation no Tyranny,” and he will be at once struck by the difference of which we speak. He may possibly think Johnson a greater man than Swift. He may possibly prefer Johnson’s style to Swift’s. But he will at once acknowledge that Johnson writes like a man who has never been out of his study. Swift writes like a man who has passed his whole life in the midst of public business. It is impossible to doubt that the superiority of Swift is to be, in a great measure, attributed to his long and close connection with Temple.’<sup>1</sup>

It is curious to remark that the man whose pen so powerfully and effectively contributed to bring to a ‘most

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay’s *Essays*, vol. iii. p. 96.

lame and impotent conclusion' that great European league against France—the foundations of which had been first laid by Temple—was Temple's political pupil. It is not too much to say that the long struggle with Louis XIV., in which the dauntless persistency of William of Orange engaged England and Europe—which was carried on with such triumphant success by Marlborough, and closed, if not too soon, yet too regardlessly of national and European interests, by Harley and St. John, at the Peace of Utrecht—might have been averted at the outset by honest adherence on the part of England to the policy of the Triple Alliance, concluded by Temple between England, Holland, and Sweden in 1668. De Witt, the other wise and honest man employed in forming that alliance, relied on the continued adherence of England to its objects and policy, because he relied on England continuing to see her own interest in them. What he did not know, or, at any rate, did not sufficiently take into account, was that the Lady England had then a Lord, whom the most frivolous and adulterous counter-interest too easily seduced at any time from that of his lawful spouse. The temptress France came with gold in her hand—with Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans (sister of Charles II.), for emissary, who opened her batteries against the Anglo-Dutch alliance by unmerciful ridicule of the insular cut of English *vests*.<sup>1</sup> Without notice—without pretext or provocation—

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Orleans, according to the author or authors of the *Character of a Trimmer* (of which lively and telling political tract the credit of authorship is divided between Sir William Coventry and the Marquis of Halifax), 'was a very welcome guest here; and her own charms and dexterity, joined with other advantages that might help her persuasions, gave her such an ascendancy that she could hardly fail of success. One of the preliminaries of her treaty, though a trivial thing in itself, yet was considerable in the consequence, as very small circumstances often are in relation to the government of the world. About this time a general humour, in opposition to France, had made us throw off their fashion and put on *vests*, that we might look more like a distinct people, and not be under the servility of imitation, which ever pays a greater deference to the original than is consistent with the equality all independent nations should pretend to. France did not like this small beginning of ill-humour, at least of emulation, wisely considering that it is a natural introduction first to make the world their apes, that they may be afterwards their slaves. It was thought that one of the instructions Madam

Charles and his shameless councillors of the 'Cabal' rushed at once from alliance with Holland, in resistance to the encroachments of France, to war on Holland, in improvised alliance with France. The suddenness of the witch-brewed hurricane threw the Dutch Republic on its beam-ends, and precipitated a revolution in its federal democracy in favour of Orange and fatal to De Witt, as a similar revolution in the preceding generation had been to Barneveldt. But the storm of perfidiously-planned hostilities against Holland subsided as suddenly as it had risen. She sought refuge in brave despair, and found succour in fresh alliances. The sole permanent product of the shamelessly treacherous league between Charles and Louis was the life-long direction of the policy of William of Orange in antagonism to France. And the sole result which the Grand Monarque reaped at last from the costly and corrupt purchase of two English monarchs was the accession, by grace of Revolution, of a third and true monarch, whose policy prepared—if it left for another reign to consummate—the most crushing overthrows the arms of France had sustained since Creçy and Agincourt.

Lord Macaulay, who, while doing full justice to Temple's intrepid and patriotic diplomacy, seemed, in his 'Essay on Temple,' to have got tired of hearing Aristides always called 'The Just,' describes him in that essay as having 'transferred to the new settlement after the Revolution the same languid sort of loyalty which he had felt for his former master'—Charles II. How, may we ask, could any honest man have felt more for such a master than a very languid sort of loyalty? 'In spite,' the great historian goes on to say, 'of the most pressing solicitations, he refused to become Secretary of State. The refusal evidently proceeded only from the dislike of trouble and danger.' Might it not have partly proceeded from Temple's sixty years, well told, and

brought along with her was to laugh us out of these *rests*, which she performed so effectually, that in a moment, like so many footmen who had quitted their masters' livery, we all took it again, and returned to our old service.'

his gout? Lord Macaulay himself states that William was in the habit of consulting Temple in his Surrey retreat on all political emergencies. On one important occasion, the King having sent to ask his opinion on the Triennial Bill, which he was very reluctant to pass, Temple's confidential secretary, Jonathan Swift, had the honour to be made the mouthpiece of the veteran statesman's prudent counsel to the monarch.

'The sequel,' says Mr. Forster, 'may be told by Swift himself. What had weighed heavily with William was that Charles I. had passed such a Bill. But Swift explained that Charles's ruin was not owing to his passing a Bill which did not hinder him from dissolving any Parliament, but to the passing another Bill which put it out of his power to dissolve the Parliament then in being without its own consent. "Mr. Swift, who was well versed in English history [here the autobiography is quoted], gave the king a short account of the matter, and a more large one to the Earl of Portland, but all in vain; for the King, by ill-advisers, was prevailed upon to refuse passing the Bill. This was the first time that Mr. Swift had ever any converse with courts, and he told his friends it was the first incident that helped to cure him of vanity." One may guess from this, the confidence in himself with which the young scholar had stepped into the closet of the King.'

When Swift first became an inmate at Moor Park, Esther Johnson (Stella) was living there under the same roof with her mother, whom Macaulay degrades into a waiting-woman, and whom Scott and Mr. Forster describe as a governess or companion of Temple's sister, Lady Giffard, with whom she continued in that connection till the death of Temple. Esther Johnson was then a little girl in a pinafore. 'I knew her,' says Swift, 'from six years old, and had some share in her education, by directing what books she should read, and perpetually instructing her in the principles of honour and virtue, from which she never swerved in any one action or moment of her life.' Contrast this simple statement, placed in a perfectly clear light by Mr. Forster, with the following broad caricature by Lord Macaulay:—

An eccentric, uncouth, disagreeable young Irishman, who had narrowly escaped plucking at Dublin, attended Sir William as an

amanuensis for board and 20*l.* a-year, dined at the second table, wrote bad verses in praise of his employer, and *made love to a very pretty, dark-eyed young girl who waited on Lady Giffard.*

This 'very pretty, dark-eyed young girl' was a poor little thing of six or seven years old, of whom Swift relates that 'she was sickly from her childhood until about the age of fifteen,' and of whom he installed himself as the early instructor in reading and writing—self-evidently without the remotest possible motive of making love to her. Many years afterwards Swift writes to Esther Johnson :—

I met Mr. Harley in the Court of Requests, and he asked me how long I had learnt the trick of writing to myself. He had seen your letter through the glass case at the coffee-house, and would swear it was my hand; and Mr. Ford, who took and sent it me, was of the same mind. I remember others have formerly said so too. *I think I was little M. D.'s writing-master.*<sup>1</sup>

In his History, Macaulay returned to the charge on Swift's position at Moor Park. The temptation recurred irresistibly to wield his usual weapons—hyperbole and contrast. The lower he could make the degradation of Swift in his years of dependence, the more striking the effect of contrasting that degradation with his after-eminence. It was a trick of style, and Macaulay's immense success has been a snare to lesser men.

It was in the interval between his first and second sojourn with Temple that Swift took orders; and he would seem to have done so in despair of his patron ever getting him any lay promotion worth taking. Temple, indeed, as we have seen, had put him in personal communication with King William III., and William had obligingly offered him a troop of horse. Afterwards there was some promise, which was never fulfilled, of the first prebend that might fall vacant. It must be remembered that so great a gulf was not fixed

<sup>1</sup> M. D. (My Dear) was part of the 'little language' which Swift adopted in his correspondence with Esther Johnson, who, as Mr. Forster observes, is usually designated by those initials, though they occasionally comprise Mrs. Dingley as well.



between clerical and secular functions before as since the Hanoverian succession. 'Important diplomatic service,' says Mr. Forster, 'was still rendered by Churchmen; secretaries' places were often at their disposal; a bishop held a cabinet office in the succeeding reign; and when the rumour went abroad, during Anne's last ministry, that St. John was going to Holland, Swift was generally named to accompany him in that employment.' We may add to these instances of the then not unusual employment of clergymen in secular offices, that one of the plenipotentiaries nominated to conclude the Peace of Utrecht was the Bishop of Bristol—the last instance, we believe, of an ostensible position in diplomacy or politics being held by an ecclesiastic in England.

The death of Sir William Temple in 1698–9 'closed,' says Mr. Forster, 'what without doubt may be called Swift's quietest and happiest time.'

In the three peaceful years of that second residence he had made full acquaintance with his own powers, unconscious yet of anything but felicity and freshness in their exercise; and the kindest side of his nature had found growth and encouragement. The soil had favoured in an equal degree his intellect and his affections. More than one feeling of this description, we may be sure, contributed to his pathetic mention of the day and hour of Temple's death. 'He died at one o'clock this morning, the 27th of January, 1698–9, and with him all that was good and amiable among men.' There was afterwards some natural disappointment at the smallness of the legacy left for editing the writings, but it never coloured unfavourably any other of his allusions to Temple. The opinion now expressed he never changed. He continued, speaking rather with affection than judgment, to characterise him as a statesman who deserved more from his country, by his eminent public services, than any man before or since, and as the most accomplished writer of his time.

To the studious leisure of Swift's years at Moor Park is due the production of two of his works most written about, if not, both of them, most read, the 'Battle of the Books' and the 'Tale of a Tub;' the latter of which was not published, however, till some years afterwards. The 'Battle of the Books' was a *pièce de circonstance*, having for its main

motive to come to the aid of Sir William Temple and his Oxford allies against Wotton and Bentley (himself a host) in the obsolete controversy on the comparative merits of ancients and moderns. Swift's patron does not seem to have shown himself particularly obliged to him for turning a matter of absurd gravity into grotesque satire. Authors are seldom very grateful to volunteer auxiliaries who make fun of their earnest. Addison gave Pope no thanks for his 'Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis.' He probably felt, as Temple had probably felt towards Swift, that his volunteer champion had more gall for others than balm for him. Swift was more intent on decrying Dryden than on defending Temple, and Pope on wounding Dennis than on shielding Addison. The 'Battle of the Books' is a piece which we confess we have never had much pleasure in reading, though we are not disposed to question the intensity of mind and meaning which Mr. Forster finds in its apparent absurdity and extravagance.

Swift described himself, shortly after the epoch of his taking orders, as 'a Whig and one who wears a gown.' His gown, however, which he donned in the last resort about the age of twenty-seven, seemed fated to bring him no satisfactory amount of Whig preferment. He went to Ireland in 1699 with Lord Berkeley, who was appointed one of the Lords Justices of that kingdom, in the double capacity during the journey of chaplain and private secretary, but was soon superseded, on the Earl's arrival in Dublin, in the latter of those offices by 'another person [we quote his autobiography] who had insinuated himself into the Earl's favour by telling him that the post of secretary was not fit for a clergyman.'

In some months the deanery of Derry fell vacant, and it was the Earl of Berkeley's turn to dispose of it. Yet things were so ordered, that the secretary having received a bribe, the deanery was disposed of to another, and Mr. Swift was put off with some other church livings, not worth above a third part of that rich deanery. The excuse pretended was his being too young, although he was then thirty years old.

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This second *passee-droit* (for so Swift considered it) put him in a towering passion, and Sheridan has preserved for posterity his very unclerical apostrophe thereon, meant for the Earl and secretary—‘ . . . confound you both for a couple of scoundrels!’ ‘Not till he had gibbeted both in some satirical verses,’ says Mr. Forster, ‘did his anger begin to subside.’ He had formed what proved a life-long intimacy at the Castle with the Countess of Berkeley and her daughters. One of these—the lively Lady Betty, afterwards Lady Elizabeth Germaine, who continued a correspondent of Swift till old age—had picked up in the chaplain’s room some unfinished verses of his, descriptive of the card-playing and other ponderous levities of the Castle, and straightway put the following tack to them, which had more of truth than of poetry :—

With these is Parson Swift,  
Not knowing how to spend his time,  
Does make a wretched shift  
To deafen them with puns and rhyme.

Punning became an inveterate habit of Swift’s, much aggravated by his intercourse with a subsequent Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Pembroke, and of which his tract, entitled ‘God’s Revenge against Punning,’ was but a mock expiation.

Not many weeks after the explosion of wrath which has just been narrated, and probably not without female influences to bring him back to the Castle (which he had momentarily quitted in disgust), Swift—as his autobiography above intimates—discontentedly accepted the vicarage of Laracor, the new Dean of Derry being required to resign to him this and the other livings which had previously been held with the deanery.

‘Swift,’ says Mr. Forster, ‘increased the glebe from one acre to twenty, and endowed the vicarage with tithes which he had himself bought, and which by his will he settled on all future incumbents subject to one condition. Language more eloquent than mine may be here interposed. “When Swift was made Vicar of Laracor,” said Mr. Gladstone to the House of Commons in March 1869, “he went into a glebe-house with one acre, and he left it with twenty acres

improved and decorated in many ways. He also endowed the vicarage with tithes purchased by him for the purpose of so bequeathing them, and I am not aware if it be generally known that a curious question arises on this bequest. This extraordinary man, even at the time when he wrote that the Irish Catholics were so down-trodden and insignificant that no possible change could bring them into a position of importance, appears to have foreseen the day when the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland would be called to account, for he proceeds to provide for a time when the episcopal religion might be no longer the national religion of the country. By some secret intimation he foresaw the shortness of its existence as an establishment, and left the property subject to a condition that in such case it should be administered for the benefit of the poor." Not quite so. The incumbents were to have the tithes for as long as the existing Church should be established; and Mr. Gladstone having withdrawn that condition, the living loses the tithes. But it is "whenever any other form of Christian religion shall become the established faith in this kingdom" that the condition arises handing them over to the poor, securing that their profits shall be given in a weekly proportion "by such other officers as may then have the power of distributing charities to the parish," and excluding from this benefit Jews, Atheists, and infidels.

'It is a bequest which certainly raises a "curious question," whether we regard it with Scott as a mere stroke of Swift's peculiar humour, or with Mr. Gladstone as a quasi-forethought for the "down-trodden" Irish Catholics.

'Shortly after his institution to Laracor, Swift received from the Archbishop of Dublin (then Marsh, the founder of the Library) the Prebend of Dunlavin in St. Patrick's Cathedral, entitling him to a seat in the chapter; and a few months later, on the 16th February, 1700-1701, he took his Doctor's Degree in Dublin University. At the beginning of April, he set sail with the Berkeleys for England, where for the present, notwithstanding his professional preferments, the most memorable portion of his life is to be passed. But let the reader disposed to be severe on such abandonment of clerical duties remember always what the Irish Church then was, and that when the Vicar of Laracor turned his back on Ireland he left behind him "a parish with an audience of half-a-score."

The one insurmountable obstacle to Swift's professional promotion was raised by himself. He published anonymously in 1704 the 'Tale of a Tub,' which appears to have lain some half-dozen years in MS. The credit of joint

authorship of this celebrated tale seems to have been claimed by Thomas Swift, whom he used to call his 'little parson cousin,' and who, at the time of its composition, was an inmate along with Jonathan at Moor Park, and very possibly may have rendered him some slight assistance on points of scholastic detail. It was the sort of masterpiece, however, which inevitably affiliated itself on the right parent, and Swift, observes Mr. Forster, though he never ventured to put his own name to it, took very good care that no one else should put *his*.

Atterbury, after saying that nothing could please more than the book did in London, added the shrewd remark that if he has guessed the man rightly who wrote it, he has reason to continue to conceal himself, because its profane strokes would be more likely to do harm to his reputation and interest in the world than its wit could do him good.

But when did wit ever put his candle under a bushel on such cool calculation? Swift never did; and then he marvelled that his friends at Court, whether Whig or Tory, never could contrive to make him a bishop—even an Irish bishop. Somers accordingly came under the secret lash of his pen as 'a false, deceitful rascal,' and Wharton as 'the most universal villain he ever knew.' Wharton's was a character to which no license of invective could do much injustice. But it was precisely his profligacy that rendered more intensely exasperating the exceptional scruples he is said to have pleaded, when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, against admitting Swift's claims to the highest church preferment. He was reported to have said that the Whig party had no character to spare, and could not afford to make such an appointment to an Irish bishopric:—

Says Clarinda, though tears it may cost,  
'Tis high time we should part, my dear Sue!  
For *your* character's totally lost—  
And *I've* not got sufficient for *two*.

To be assigned the part of 'Sue' by such a 'Clarinda' would have provoked a saint. How much more must it have provoked a Swift!

The 'Tale of a Tub' is, in its main drift, with many digressions, a 'show up' of superstition and fanaticism, as embodied to Swift's eyes in Romish Catholicism and English and Scottish Puritanism. Voltaire gave Swift the palm over Rabelais, and styled him 'Rabelais dans son bon sens, et vivant en bonne compagnie.' Good company, in our days, would object to a good deal in the 'Tale of a Tub,' if indeed it were much in the habit of looking there for its ideas of what Mr. Gladstone rechristens 'Vaticanism.' The age has certainly gained in delicacy, though perhaps not in vigour, since Swift gave so piquant an air of originality to so old an apologue as that of the father with three sons, and his last bequests to each. Swift was not so ordurous as Rabelais, but he could not plead Rabelais' excuse for wrapping up grave meanings in grotesque and disgusting disguises. The *curé* of Meudon might have risked vivi-cremation had he made perfectly plain what he meant with his 'Ile Sonnante,' his 'Papegaux,' 'Papimanes,' and the rest. The Vicar of Laracor only risked getting a deanery instead of a bishopric. In this unparalleled satire, as in everything Swift wrote, every stroke told. Lord Peter's 'purchase of a large continent, lately said to have been discovered in *terra australis incognita*'—his 'sovereign remedy for the worms'—his 'erecting of a whispering office for the public good'—his 'famous universal pickle' and 'powder pimperlump'—his roaring and rapacious bulls—his 'abominable faculty of telling huge palpable lies on all occasions,' and invoking 'the D—l to broil them eternally that will not believe me'—all these traits hit the humour of the Protestant public in the days of Queen Anne; Popery, only some sixteen years before, having been pulled off the throne, and the loaves and fishes of the Church snatched from its greedy grasp. Again, Swift's description of 'The Almighty North,' a Deity 'whose peculiar habitation was situated in a certain region, well-known to the ancient Greeks, by them called Σκοτία, or the land of darkness'—of the origin of tub-preaching—of Brother Jack's bibliolatriy and predestinarianism—of his affected differences in habit and behaviour from the rest of Christen-

dom—‘in winter he always went loose and unbuttoned, and clad as thin as possible, to let in the ambient heat; and in summer lapped himself close and thick to keep it out’—of his ‘tongue so musculous and subtile that he could twist it up into his nose, and deliver a strange kind of speech from thence’—of a disease of which he was troubled, ‘reverse to that called the stinging of the tarantula,’ so that he ‘would run mad at the noise of music’—of his fearing no colours, but mortally hating all, and bearing, ‘upon that account, a cruel aversion against painters; insomuch that, in his paroxysms, as he walked the streets, he would have his pockets loaded with stones to pelt at the signs’—above all, of the provoking involuntary resemblance Jack retained to Peter, though he had torn his coat to rags to get off the embroidery, on purpose to remove every vestige of such resemblance—all this could not but be read with keen relish in all quarters where English Churchmen’s kibes had so lately been galled by Scotch Presbyterianism, revenging with rival bigotry the hard usage it had had at their hands under the last Stuarts.

It may here be remarked that Swift was equally master of three different prose styles—that of Broad Rabelaisian burlesque; that of dry and bitter irony; and that of sober and serious public instruction or public business. Of his *pulpit* style, expressly as such, we should hesitate to accept, without reservation, Dr. Johnson’s favourable opinion. There is an old story of his Satanic Majesty, once on a time, having delivered a most harrowing sermon, in the garb of a monk, on the eternity and intensity of hell torments. Some familiar asked him how he could think of preaching so dead against the interests of his own establishment.\* ‘You are quite mistaken,’ replied the sable party addressed. ‘Did you not observe that there was *no unction* in my sermon?’ To our humble thinking there is in Swift’s sermons no unction. He himself acknowledged that, from the time of his political controversies, he could only preach pamphlets.

Amongst the foremost examples of Swift’s three prose styles are those successively published during the years of

his residence (and non-residence) at Laracor. Three or four years after his Rabelaisian escapade—the ‘Tale of a Tub’—appeared his gravely-ironical ‘Argument against the Abolishing of Christianity.’ Shortly after followed, apparently by way of atonement, two perfectly serious tracts, ‘The Sentiments of a Church of England Man with respect to Religion and Government,’ and the ‘Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners.’ Amongst the proposals put forth in this latter tract, written in 1709, and published, after the fashion of that age, as ‘By a Person of Quality,’ was the appointment of ‘itinerary commissioners to inspect everywhere throughout the kingdom into the conduct at least of men in office, with respect to their morals and religion.’ Under ‘so excellent a Princess as the present Queen,’ and under ‘a ministry where every single person was of distinguished piety, the empire of vice and irreligion,’ according to Swift, ‘would be soon destroyed in this great metropolis, and receive a terrible blow throughout the whole island.’ Swift proposes, amongst other things, that clergymen should be dispensed from wearing their clerical habits, unless at those seasons when they are doing the business of their function, as ‘whoever happens to see a scoundrel in a gown reeling home at midnight (a sight neither frequent nor miraculous) is apt to entertain an ill idea of the whole order, and at the same time to be extremely comforted in his own vices.’ He observes ‘that the corruptions of the theatre, peculiar to our age and nation [since Charles II.], need continue no longer than while the Court is content to connive at or neglect them.’ He proposes (and the legislation and police of our orderly age have bettered the instruction) that ‘all taverns and ale-houses should be obliged to dismiss their company at twelve at night;’ and complains of ‘so little care taken for the building of churches, particularly here in London, that five parts in six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service.’ This complaint of Swift gave the first impulse to raising the fund for building Queen Anne’s fifty new churches in the metropolis.



If the 'Tale of a Tub' did Swift harm with Queen Anne and her ecclesiastical councillors, it did him honour with the 'little senate' of wits which sat at Will's, and took laws from Addison. 'Swift's note-books,' says Mr. Forster, 'fix the year 1705 as the beginning, not of his acquaintance, but of his more intimate intercourse with Addison. The most pleasing of writers and zealous of Whigs, who was next year to have his party reward by appointment as Under-Secretary of State, had this year (1705) published his 'Travels in Italy;' and I possess a large paper presentation-copy with an inscription in Addison's hand, which is itself an emphatic memorial of one of the most famous of literary friendships.'

TO DE. JONATHAN SWIFT,

THE MOST AGREEABLE COMPANION

THE TRUEST FRIEND

AND THE GREATEST GENIUS OF HIS AGE

'THIS BOOK IS PRESENTED BY HIS MOST

HUMBLE SERVANT THE AUTHOUR.

During the five years intervening between the date above given and the accession of (and Swift's accession to) the Tory ministry of 1710, his intimacy with Addison, Steele, and the other Whig wits continued close and convivial. That it suffered interruption from Swift's change of party colours was against his will and wish, and in spite of his efforts to serve such of his old friends (Steele for example) as needed to be served by his good offices with the new ministry. These intervening five years were, indeed, a lustre of sparks struck from wits warmed by wine, for wherever Addison was, wine was, notwithstanding his well-sustained reputation for morality and piety.

'Swift's note book,' says Mr. Forster, 'contains entries of dinners to or with them all, and of frequent coaches to the houses of Halifax in New Palace Yard or at Hampton Court. We trace them dining at the "George," with Addison for host, at the "Fountain" with Steele, and at the "St. James's," where Wortley Montagu entertains. Nor did they fail to see each other frequently even in such intervals of

their not coming together as are mentioned by Swift to Ambrose Philips. "The triumvirate of Addison, Steele, and me, come together as seldom as the sun, moon, and earth; but I often see each of them, and each of them me and each other." Just before March, Swift had launched his joke against the astrological almanac-makers; and all the town was now laughing over the relation of the accomplishment of the first of Mr. Bickerstaff's predictions.'

Bickerstaff was a name Swift had happened to see over a locksmith's shop, and which he assumed, writing in Steele's 'Tatler,' in the character of a genuine astrologer, against the chief offender amongst vulgar almanac-makers, John Partridge, bred originally a cobbler. Mr. Bickerstaff's first gravely-worded prediction was that of the death of Partridge at a specified day and hour—followed next day by a most circumstantial narrative of the fulfilment of that prediction within a few minutes of the exact time specified.

Partridge, who had no mind to have his ill-gotten gains as an almanac-maker consigned with him to the tomb, in putting forth his almanac for 1709 informed his loving countrymen that—

Squire Bickerstaff was a sham name assumed by a lying, impudent fellow, and that, blessed be God, John Partridge was still living, and in health, and all were knaves who reported otherwise. To this Mr. Bickerstaff lost no time in retorting with a 'Vindication' more diverting than either of its precursors, rebuking Mr. Partridge's scurrility as very indecent from one gentleman to another for differing from him on a point merely speculative. This point was, as he went on to explain, whether or not Mr. Partridge was alive; and with all brevity, perspicuity, and calmness he proceeded to the discussion. First he pointed out that about a thousand gentlemen having bought Mr. Partridge's almanac for the year merely to find what he said against Mr. Bickerstaff, had been seen and heard lifting up their eyes and crying out at every line they read 'they were sure no man alive ever writ such damned stuff as this!' But the proof that no man alive wrote it appeared in his own very language of denial, that 'he is not only now alive, but was also alive upon that very 29th of March which it was foretold he should die on'; whereby his opinion was plainly announced that a man *may be* alive now who was not alive twelve months ago. And here lay in truth the whole sophistry of his argument. ♦ 'He dares not assert he was alive ever

since the 29th of March, but that "he is now alive *and was so on that day.*" I grant the latter; for he did not die till night, as appears by the printed account of his death, in a letter to a lord; and whether he be since revived, I leave the world to judge.' .

'The jest,' continued Mr. Forster, 'had by this time diffused itself into so wide a popularity that all the wits became eager to take part in it; Rowe, Steele, Addison, and Prior contributed to it in divers amusing ways, and Congreve described, under Partridge's name, the distresses and reproaches Squire Bickerstaff had exposed him to, inso-much that he could not leave his door without somebody twitting him for sneaking about without paying his funeral expenses. The poor astrologer himself, meanwhile, was continually advertising that he was *not* dead;' and advertising in vain. The Stationers' Company, it is added, applied for an injunction against the continued publication of almanacs put forth under the name of a dead man; and Sir Paul Methuen wrote to Swift that Mr. Bickerstaff's predictions had been condemned to the flames by the Portuguese Inquisition.

Mr. Forster cites the following amusing illustration which Young gave to Spence of Swift's figure and person (it might be added, and humour) in the latter years of his Whig connection, when Swift had reached about the sober meridian of forty:—

Mentioning that Ambrose Philips was a neat dresser and very vain (Pope laughed at him for wearing red stockings), he says that in a company where Philips, Congreve, Swift, and others were, the talk turned on Julius Cæsar. 'And what sort of person,' said Ambrose, did they suppose him to be?' To which someone replying that the coins gave the impression of a small, thin-faced man, 'Yes,' rejoined Philips, proceeding to give an exact likeness of himself, 'for my part I should take him to have been of a lean make, pale complexion, extremely neat in his dress, and five feet seven inches high.' Swift made no sign till he had quite done, and then with the utmost gravity said, 'And I, Mr. Philips, should take him to have been a plump man, just five feet eight inches and a half high, not very neatly dressed, in a black gown with pudding sleeves.'

Among the interesting discoveries made by Mr. Forster at Narford, the family seat of Mr. Andrew Fountaine, descendant of Swift's friend, Sir Andrew Fountaine, is the first draft of Swift's well-known and most amusing modern version of the ancient legend of Baucis and Philemon, immortalised by Ovid. This little poem Swift made 'beautifully less,' at Addison's suggestion; and the un-authorlike facility with which he struck out, added, or altered, just as Addison decreed, is a fine trait of carelessness of his literary offspring, which Mr. Forster contrasts with Pope's sensitive and suspicious vanity on a like occasion.

We must hasten on to the epoch of Swift's change of party, upon which rest the charges that have weighed most heavily against his memory. We do not find it possible to ascribe that change to pure public principle. Such purity of principle was scarcely to be met with in the politics or politicians of Queen Anne's reign. 'I am afraid,' says Bolingbroke, in his well-known 'Letter to Sir William Windham' (referred to by Mr. Forster),

that we came to Court in the same dispositions as all parties have done; that the principal spring of our actions was to have the government of the State in our hands; that our principal views were the conservation of this power, great employments to ourselves, and great opportunities of rewarding those who had helped to raise us, and of hurting those who stood in opposition to us. It is, however, true, that with these considerations of private and party interest, there were others intermingled which had for their object the public good of the nation, at least what we took to be such.

We find pretty much the same mixture of motives (the personal, it must be owned, predominating) in Swift's adhesion to the Harley St. John ministry, as in Bolingbroke's account of his own part in its formation. The personal neglect with which he had found, or fancied, himself treated by the Whigs was—his letters to Stella leave not the slightest doubt—the main source of Swift's readiness to transfer his talents, thus, as he thought, undervalued, to Tory service. But it is not less evident that his political sagacity, clerical professional bias, and pronounced prefer-

ence of the landed to the moneyed interest (which, at the epoch before us, was rejoicing in war and war loans), intermingled in his case, as in St. John's, considerations of public good with those personal views and personal resentments which were avowed by both, with about equal frankness, as the principal spring of their actions.

The belligerent Whig cause, according to so good a Queen Anne's Whig authority as Lord Stanhope, turned from right to wrong when the High Allies, in 1709, refused to accept from Louis XIV. terms of peace which really included all the legitimate objects of the war. At the conferences of Gertruydenberg, Torcy, in the name of Louis, and much swayed by the wise counsels of Marlborough, went—we quote Lord Stanhope—

to the farthest limits of his powers to obtain a peace. He was willing to admit the several demands of England. He was willing to give up ten fortresses in Flanders as a barrier to the Dutch. He was willing to yield Luxemburg, STRASBURG, and Brisach to the Empire; and, moreover (subject to further instructions), Exiles and Fenestrelles to the Duke of Savoy. Above all, he consented to relinquish the whole of the vast inheritance of Spain. But he paused at the further demand, that Louis should promise or enforce abdication of the Spanish crown by his grandson. He could only promise to withhold every succour of men and money, and leave Philip to his fate.<sup>1</sup>

But the party of war, or peace on the hardest terms, was still ascendant at the Hague; and Marlborough—who, like other great English commanders, was no passionate partisan of war—was overruled in his dispositions for peace by his instructions from England. Upon the Whig ministry, therefore, in 1709, and their continental allies, rests, according to the unimpeachable authority of Lord Stanhope, the grave charge of protracting a bloody and costly conflict, which, even in the judgment of the great general who conducted it, might then have been brought on fair terms to a close. 'The High Allies have been the ruin of us,' exclaimed Swift, two years before the date of his alleged apostasy from

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 385.

Whig to Tory principles. If Lord Stanhope, as above cited, is right, wherein was Swift wrong? And how, may we ask with unfeigned respect for the lamented historian,<sup>1</sup> could Lord Stanhope, in his 'History of England from the Peace of Utrecht,' say of Swift that—

bred as a Whig, under Sir William Temple; patronised as a Whig by Lord Somers; boasting of himself as a Whig in his writings; without a pretence of principle, without the slightest charge against his friends on public grounds, and merely on an allegation of personal neglect, he turned round to the Tory leaders at the very moment when those leaders were coming into office, and having evidently no better reason for deserting his cause than that he thought it in danger.

What cause? The cause of war *à outrance* with France? Swift thought, as we have seen Lord Stanhope also thinks, that cause a bad one. The cause of Whig Church politics? Swift had stated to Lord Somers, and set forth in print, two or three years before the fall of the Whig 'ministry, his reasons for taking exception to those politics. So early as 1708 he had told the Whig ministry plainly that they might have carried the majority of the clergy with them if they would but have veiled or bridled their contempt of the claims and sentiments of the clerical order, and shown the Church as a body the same respect and consideration as they showed its eminent members individually. Whatever may be thought of that view at the present day, in Queen Anne's time its emphatic expression by Swift rang true.

On the accession of the Tory ministry of 1710, the scene instantly changed for Swift, as well as for his Irish ecclesi-

<sup>1</sup> As these pages are passing through the press, we have to lament the death of the accomplished historian. This is neither the time nor the place to pay a fitting tribute to the important services which Lord Stanhope rendered to literature, not only by his various historical and biographical works, but also by his advocacy in public of the claims of literature, and by his kindness in private to men of letters. But it may be permitted us to mark our sense of the loss which this *Review* has sustained by the death of one of its warmest friends and most valued writers. His first contribution was an article on 'The French Revolution,' which appeared as long ago as March 1833; and from that time to our last number he continued to take a lively interest in the *Review*, constantly giving us the benefit of his advice, and frequently contributing some of the most valuable articles to our pages.

astical constituents—that is, for the authorities of the Irish Church, who had entrusted him with the advocacy at Court of the claims of that Church to the remission of ‘First-Fruits’ which the good Queen Anne had lately remitted in England, thus affording ground for hope that her piety would extend the same boon to Ireland. Harley at once saw the importance of securing to the side of the ministry such a political proselyte and literary auxiliary as Swift. He writes to Esther Johnson of the First Minister: ‘I am told by all hands he has a mind to gain me over.’ At his first interview with Harley, the latter listened patiently to the Vicar of Laracor’s whole history of the Irish First-Fruits’ grievance, which Swift had pressed to no purpose on the Whigs, and when he had heard it through, promised to do the business at once with the Queen, and kept his word. He should bring Swift and the Secretary of State, Mr. St. John, acquainted; he called him by his Christian name, Jonathan; and he ‘spoke so many things of personal kindness and esteem,’ that the other was half inclined to believe what some friends had told him, that the ministers were ‘ready and eager to do anything to bring him over.’

Upon Swift’s first dinner with Mr. Secretary St. John, better known to fame in after years as Bolingbroke, he writes to Esther Johnson:—

I am thinking what a veneration we used to have for Sir William Temple, because he might have been Secretary of State at fifty; and here is a young fellow, hardly thirty, in that employment. His father is a man of pleasure, that walks the Mall, and frequents St. James’s Coffee-house and the chocolate-houses; and the young son is principal Secretary of State. Is there not something very odd in that?

Swift informs his correspondent that, when he supposed the ‘First-Fruits’ business to be finally settled, he told the minister that he would very shortly be intending for Ireland; on which Harley frankly told him that

his friends and himself knew very well how usefully he had written against measures proposed by the late ministry, to which on principle he had been opposed; and this had convinced them that he

would not feel bound to continue to favour their cause simply because of his personal esteem for several among them. There was now entirely a new scene; but the difficulty to those who directed it was the want of some good men to keep up the spirit raised in the people, to assert the principles and justify the proceedings of the new ministers. He then fell into some personal civilities which it will not become me to repeat, and closed by saying that it should be his particular care to represent me to the Queen as a person they could not be without. I promised to do my endeavour in that way for some few months. To which he replied, that he expected no more, and that he had other and greater occasions for me.

‘One thing,’ adds Mr. Forster, ‘the First Minister had not said, but Swift knew it very well, and St. John afterwards characteristically confessed it to him. ‘We were determined to have you,’ he said. ‘You were the only one we were afraid of.’

If it were necessary to say anything more in extenuation of Swift’s so-called political apostasy, we might ask, as Swift himself asked in one of the first ‘Examiners’ he wrote for the Harley ministry—how certain great men of the late ministry (Marlborough and Godolphin) came to be Whigs; and by what figure of speech certain others, put lately into great employments (Shrewsbury and Somerset), were to be termed Tories? What, indeed, was Marlborough himself but a military convert from Toryism caught by the baits held out to his love of fame and love of money by a Whig Government, and who now gave some signs of being willing enough to apostatise back again to his original party, if they would have kept him in possession of that supreme command of the army which he had endeavoured in vain, under the late Administration, to get granted him by royal patent for life? What was Harley but a politician of early Whig antecedents, who took, chameleon-like, any colours which promised best at the moment to serve his turn? Political leaders who wavered in their allegiance, as Marlborough and Godolphin did between two dynasties, could scarcely be entitled to throw the first stone at political writers who carried theirs from one to the other of two



parties. In reviewing an epoch of which '*Nusquam tuta fides*' might have been the motto and cognisance, where is the political justice of singling out for special animadversion one individual instance, like Swift's, of alleged literary faithlessness? Faithlessness, we again ask, to what cause? If to the cause of war with France till her ruin as a first-rate Power was accomplished, to persist in lavish expense of blood and treasure to effect such an end was no wiser than the effort of one eye of Europe to put out the other. Again, if the principle represented by Whig colours in 1710 was the principle of religious equality in the eye of the law, that principle was not adhered to by any party as regarded at least one communion, and, besides, was not a principle to which Swift had ever pledged himself, but the contrary.

At this epoch Mr. Forster says very truly of the subject of his biography:—

He had nothing in him of the hired scribe, and was never at any time in any one's pay. The minister he supported had to hold him by other ties. He might fairly look to future preferment, but the immediate condition of his party service was to 'grow domestic' with those he served, exacting from them increased personal consideration. His familiar footing with the leading men alike of Whig and Tory, and his exception to the 'unconversable' Somers, have in this their explanation; and what in later life he laughingly wrote to Pope was not without its gravity of meaning. 'I will tell you that all my endeavours from a boy to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; whether right or wrong is no great matter: and so the reputation of great learning does the office of a blue ribbon, or of a coach and six horses.'

Queen Anne had only one public principle, that of zeal for the Church, and adhered to it with a tenacity which must be regarded as honourable. That one principle Godolphin had clumsily contrived to array in opposition to the Whig ministry of which he was chief, by the impolitic solemnity he chose to give to the trial of Dr. Sacheverell. Harley and St. John, for whom that impolicy had furnished

the first stepping-stone to power, were, it must be admitted, rather curious representatives of Church principles. They had both received their early education amongst the Dissenters, and the two were pretty much on a par in sincere Churchmanship. But the really decisive motive with Queen Anne for changing her confidential councillors would seem to have been the intolerable temper and tyranny of the Duchess of Marlborough—the ‘dear Mrs. Freeman’ of her ‘unfortunate faithful Morley.’ The Queen had been sufficiently alarmed already by the Duke’s insistence on his captain-generalship for life; but she was daily disgusted by the overbearing advantage taken by his shrew of a wife of her own weak spirits and apparently inexhaustible patience. There needed only an adroit waiting-woman, and a crafty councillor brought up the back-stairs, to instruct her Majesty how to shake herself free at once from domestic and political thralldom. And the pusillanimous temper of the Prime Minister Godolphin conspired for the overthrow of his own party, with the new-born self-assertion of the sovereign. ‘If Lord Treasurer can but be persuaded to act like a man!’ wrote Sunderland to Marlborough. But Godolphin and his colleagues tamely suffered the Queen to break up their cabinet one by one, like the old man’s bundle of sticks in the fable. And the Duchess of Marlborough’s violence and insolence completed the ruin of her party, by finally exasperating her long-suffering mistress against herself.

Our life-like acquaintance with the Harley-Bolingbroke ministry we owe entirely to Swift’s *Journal to Stella* :—

‘That wonderful journal,’ says Mr. Forster, ‘that unrivalled picture of the time, in which he set down day by day the incidents of three momentous years; which received every hope, fear, or fancy in its undress as it rose to him; which was written for one person’s private pleasure, and has had indestructible attractiveness for every one since; which has no parallel in literature for the historic importance of the men and the events that move along its pages, or the homely vividness of the language that describes them; and of which the loves and hates, the joys and griefs, the expectations and disappointments, the great and little in closest neighbourhood, the

alternating tenderness and bitterness, and, above all, the sense and nonsense in marvellous mixture and profusion, remain a perfect microcosm of human life.'

Where would Swift now be, as a living memory among men, but for his *Journal to Stella*? It may be too much to say where Johnson would have been but for Boswell's '*Life*.' Captain Gulliver would have sufficiently secured his creator from oblivion, as Robinson Crusoe did Defoe. But what manner of man Swift was individually, as well as in relation to his most distinguished contemporaries, must have been gathered from sources of very imperfect or very untrustworthy information, had he not himself put on record, for sympathetic eyes, in the minutest detail, his daily life in London at an epoch of intense interest as well for himself as the public. The curious thing is, that Mr. Forster has made the discovery that the *Journal to Stella* has no right to be called the *Journal to Stella*, though it be so entitled in every edition of Swift hitherto published. 'At the time when the letters composing that journal were addressed to Esther Johnson and her companion, the name which eternally connects her with Swift had not been applied to her. Most certainly it was not used in any part of the letters themselves, nor had been previously in any known piece of writing concerning her.'

Another meritorious feat of Mr. Forster is the discovery of the origin of the 'little language' which forms so large and whimsical an ingredient in Swift's letters to Esther Johnson, and the restoration in his Appendix of the passages written in that language, so far as recoverable from the partially preserved original MSS. of those letters in the British Museum. 'There can be no doubt,' says Mr. Forster, 'that what he called "our own little language," hitherto all but suppressed by those who have supplied the materials for his biography existing in his journals, began at Moor Park, and began in the man's imitation of a child's imperfect speech. The loving playfulness expressed by the "little language" had dated from Esther Johnson's child-

hood; it in some way satisfied wants of his own nature, or he would not have continued so lavishly to indulge it.'

Amongst the earlier entries in what we must crave leave still to call the 'Journal to Stella,' we find the following minute item to satisfy the curiosity of his correspondent about his London lodgings:—

I lodge in Bury Street, where I removed a week ago. I have the first floor, a dining-room and bed-chamber, at eight shillings a week; *plaguy deep*, but I spend nothing for eating, never go to a tavern, and very seldom in a coach; yet, after all, it will be expensive.

Presently he writes:—

You must know it is fatal to me [I am fated] to be a scoundrel and a prince the same day; for being to see him [Harley] at four, I could not engage myself to dine at any friend's; so I went to Tooke [his publisher], to give him a ballad and dine with him; but he was not at home, so I was forced to go to a blind chophouse, and dine for ten pence upon gill ale, bad broth, and three chops of mutton; and then go reeking from thence to the First Minister of State.

Another specimen of the small economies of Swift's 'Life in London':—

I have gotten half a bushel of coals, and Patrick, the extravagant whelp, had a fire ready for me; but I picked off the coals before I went to bed.

It is only due to Swift to say that he was not less minutely attentive to prudential calculation for others than he was for himself:—

To-day I was all about St. Paul's, and up at top, like a fool, with Sir Andrew Fountaine and two more, and spent seven shillings for my dinner, like a puppy: this is the second time he has served me so; but I will never do it again, though all mankind should persuade me; unconsidering puppies! There is a young fellow here in town we are all fond of, about a year or two come from the University,—one Harrison, a pretty little fellow, with a great deal of wit, good sense, and good nature; has written some mighty pretty things. He has nothing to live on but being governor of one of the Duke of Queensberry's sons for forty pounds a-year. The fine fellows are always inviting him to the tavern, and *make him pay his club*. A colonel

and a lord were at him and me the same way to-night. I absolutely refused, and made Harrison lag behind, and persuaded him not to go to them. I tell you this, because I find all rich fellows have that humour of using all people without any consideration of their fortunes ; but I will see them rot before they shall serve me so. Lord Halifax is always teasing me to go down to his country house, which will cost me a guinea to his servants, and twelve shillings coach hire ; and he shall be hanged first. Is not this a plaguy silly story ? But I am vexed at the heart, for I love the young fellow, and am resolved to stir up people to do something for him : he is a Whig, and I will put him upon some of my cast Whigs, for I have done with them, and they have, I hope, done with this kingdom for our time.

*O cæcas hominum mentes !* In little more than three years the Whigs were back again in power, and the Tories the proscribed party under a new dynasty.

The 'little language' of infantine and affectionate jargon in Swift's *Journal to Stella* contrasts rather piquantly with what we may call the large language, also to be found in that journal, of opprobrious epithets on all who thwarted his humour or crossed his personal purposes. 'Grave mistakes,' says Mr. Forster, 'have been made by giving importance to such chance words as these, which are as frequent as they are meaningless in the speech of Swift.' Mr. Forster instances Swift's description of the Duke of Ormond's daughters, when he met them in London in 1710, as 'insolent drabs, coming up to his very mouth to salute him'—'the epithet of course meaning nothing but that, being fond of them, he was free to call them what he pleased.' In like manner, he writes to Stella that he had 'supped with "the ramblingest lying rogue on earth," as with a not unloving familiarity he calls Lord Peterborough.' We cannot, however, go along with Mr. Forster in saying that when Swift calls 'the Irish bishops insolent, ungrateful rascals, and Lord Somers himself a rascal, the words ought not to be credited with meanings such as would be given them in present ordinary use.' We are, for our part, of opinion that when Swift called Lord Somers 'a false, deceitful rascal,' and said of the Whigs collectively, 'Rot them for ungrateful

dogs!—he quite meant what he said. He meant to express a bitter sense of having been ill-used by them, and put off with fair words instead of buttered parsnips. In his age of unpublished debates in Parliament, literary services were more indispensable to public men and political parties than they are at present, and Swift had seen Addison paid for his, not with empty praise, but with the solid pudding of an Under-Secretaryship. But Swift had made the mistake of entering a profession whose graver members were scandalised by the satires he penned in its cause. A priest without vocation, a politician loaded with clerical odium, what can be said but '*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*'

That Swift was in earnest in abusing all who failed to help him forward, we cannot ourselves doubt. But perhaps it is hardly enough remembered that his large language about them chiefly occurs in his confidential letters to Stella, and in his marginal notes to his copy of Burnet's 'History of his Own Time.' Those of his readers who are most disposed to inveigh against Swift's invectives may take blame to themselves as parties to the publicity of those invectives—so far as participating in that insatiable curiosity for everything that dropped from that prolific and careless pen, which his successive editors, from Mr. Deane Swift to Mr. Forster, have done their utmost to satisfy. But for that curiosity, Swift's most exorbitant epithets on foes and false friends might have met no other eyes than those they were meant to meet, or, at most, no others than of those who might come into possession of his copy of Burnet.

Much less easily excusable than Swift's conduct to parties was his conduct to women. Upon the general judgment to be passed on that conduct we shall have more to say presently. Meanwhile we may remark, in closing the chapter of his connection with English politics, that as Swift sinned most signally against two women—poor Stella and Vanessa—so by two women—the Queen and the Duchess of Somerset—he was most signally punished. The same wayward temper which marked his personal relations with the sex prompted

his public attack, in the interest of his Tory patrons, on the one woman in England of whom he himself said, in a lucid interval, that she had more personal credit than all the Queen's servants put together. In the 'Windsor Prophêcy,' which Lady Masham's prudence just withheld him from publishing, but which his own prudence did not withhold him from distributing printed copies of among the sixteen symposiac members of the October Club, Swift, in the coarsest terms the language would afford him, charged the Duchess of Somerset, the Queen's new Whig favourite (whom she seems to have chosen, with the policy of conscious weakness, to maintain a balance of power in her closet against her Tory one), with two crimes—the having been privy to the murder of her second husband, and the having red hair. The first charge was the mere reckless fabrication of party malice; the second must have sunk deeper because it was true. The consequences to Swift are recorded in rhyme by himself as follows:—

Now angry Somerset her vengeance vows  
On Swift's reproaches for her murder'd spouse :  
From her red locks her mouth with venom fills,  
And thence into the royal ear distils.

It is certain that Harley and Bolingbroke, if agreed in nothing else, were agreed in the desire to keep Swift in England, and therefore to make his position in England tenable in point of personal dignity. Not less certainly some superior power or influence withstood their wishes, so that Swift's patrons, in an age when Cabinets were compelled to bow submissively to Court influences, found themselves unable to provide, even by a prebend at Windsor, for their most politically effective and most personally valued partisan. To the very last, he confesses, he thought the ministry would not have parted with him, and could only conclude that they had not the option of making a suitable provision for him in England. In order to vacate the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, for Swift, the Prime Minister, who had now been raised to the peerage by the title of Earl of Oxford, with the concurrence of the Duke of Ormond, then Lord-Lieutenant

of Ireland, procured the removal of Swift's friend Dr. Sterne from that deanery by appointment to the bishopric of Dro-more. 'Sterne,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'had no apparent interest of his own, and was rather obnoxious to the Duke of Ormond. The circumstance, therefore, of his being promoted to the higher dignity, while Swift, with all his influence, only gained that from which Sterne was removed, indicates a sort of compromise between the Queen and her ministers ;' the former remaining resolute not to put a mitre—even an Irish mitre—on the head of Swift. 'This affair,' he says in one of his last letters to Stella, 'was carried with great difficulty, which vexes me. But they say here [in London] it is much to my reputation that I have *made a bishop*, in spite of all the world, to get the best deanery in Ireland.'

In Jeffrey's Essay on Swift, republished from the 'Edinburgh Review,' some good indignation is expended on the monstrous greed of the new Dean of St. Patrick's importuning a ministry whom his writings had first floated, and kept afloat for years, in English public opinion, to pay the expenses (which he found would amount to about 1,000*l.*) incurred on his induction into his Irish deanery—the discharge of which, if thrown (as they were) on Swift himself, must involve him in debt, of which he had always a wise horror. We are reminded of the impeachment of the Ass, in the fable, before the High Court of Beasts, for having indulged—not, like the Beasts of high degree, in wholesale ovicide, but in a single sacrilegious nibble at the parson's glebe-grass.

It is a pleasing trait in the character of Addison, and a strong testimony to the personal qualities of Swift, that at the epoch of definitive Tory prostration and Whig triumph, on the accession of George I., Addison, whom that sudden shifting of the political scene replaced in office, hastened to intimate, through the Bishop of Derry, to Swift his wish to renew with him those former friendly relations which had been cooled to some considerable degree by party warfare. Swift met his old friend's overture in the spirit in which it was made, and, congratulating Addison on his new-fledged



honours as Secretary of State, added, 'Three or four more such choices would gain more hearts in three weeks than the harsher measures of Government in as many years.' Had Swift's change of party colours under the Tory ministry dishonoured him personally in the eyes of contemporaries, can it appear probable to candid readers that Addison, of all men, would have volunteered renewing their old habits of friendly correspondence? <sup>1</sup>

The unfortunate manner in which the opposite fates of Swift and Addison put and kept, in each instance, the wrong man in the wrong place was well hit off in the following few words of Sir James Mackintosh, 'What a good exchange of stations might have been made by Swift and Addison! Addison would have made an excellent Dean, and Swift an admirable Secretary of State.'

In the career of the two great clerico-political humorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Jonathan Swift and Sydney Smith—there are traits of resemblance worth noting. Of these the most salient one is that both wanted to be bishops, and that neither could ever completely realise what malign influence frustrated him of a mitre.<sup>2</sup>

However little Swift's enemies, lay or clerical, might be disposed to recognise his title to be considered a good Christian, he placed beyond doubt his title to boast himself a good Churchman. His ecclesiastical politics, notwithstanding (or including) his 'Tale of a Tub,' were, from first to last, those of a staunch and somewhat (politically) intolerant Anglican. His methods, indeed, of serving, or saving, the sacred institu-

<sup>1</sup> 'The death of Addison,' says Sir W. Scott, in his Memoir of Swift, 'broke off their renewed correspondence, after some kind letters had been exchanged. Swift found a valuable successor in Tickell, the poet, surviving friend and literary executor of Addison. He was secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, an office of high trust, and he often employed the interest which it gave him in compliance with Swift's recommendations.'

<sup>2</sup> The late Lord Holland wrote to Sydney Smith in 1809, 'I did not fail to remind Lord Grenville, that the only author to whom we both thought "Peter Plymley" could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, *we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than Tories.*' Mitres came to be in Whig gift, but not one for Peter Plymley.

tion, with whose interests he had come to identify those of his own ambition, might naturally be regarded by a religious queen, or represented to her by less religious councillors, as disqualifying Swift for the highest dignities of the Church. But in all his ecclesiastical politics, whether English or Irish, his efforts were *bonâ fide* devoted to ecclesiastical interests. Here, again, is a striking point of resemblance between the great Dean of St. Patrick's, in the eighteenth century, and the scarce less renowned, in his day and generation, Canon of St. Paul's, in the nineteenth. Each of them took up the cudgels for the Church in his different age and fashion, with a thoroughly congenial spirit of antagonism against its immediate assailants, the worst assailants being by each regarded as within its own pale. And to each (both being frustrate of mitres) these appeared naturally to be the reforming or rapacious members of the Irish or English Episcopal bench. Swift's, like Sydney Smith's, tracts on ecclesiastical subjects were mainly devoted to the defence of the inferior clergy against episcopal encroachments. Some passages in his 'Considerations,' written in 1731, on two bills carried by the Irish bishops through the (Irish) Upper House, but defeated (mainly by Swift's exposure of them) in the Commons, are such exact prototypes of Sydney Smith's 'Letters to Archdeacon Singleton,' directed against the doings of the Ecclesiastical Commission of *his* day, that we cannot resist the temptation of placing them in juxtaposition. Swift's vehement deprecation of measures for multiplying a poor clergy, and his description (*in terrorem* of Irish landlords and farmers) of the 'little, hedge, contemptible, illiterate vicar, from twenty to fifty pounds a-year, the son of a weaver, pedlar, tailor, or miller,' at once recall to recollection Sydney Smith's portraiture of the parson of the future after the carrying out of the Church reform scheme of Bishop Blomfield and the Ecclesiastical Commission of 1840. He painted that parson in unforgettable traits, as

obese, dumpy, neither ill-natured nor good-natured, neither learned nor ignorant, striding over the stiles to church, dusty and deliquescent,

with a second-rate wife and four parochial children, full of catechism and bread-and-butter.

But Swift's following suggestion is still more curiously anticipatory of the sarcastic incisiveness of our later humorous Church champion:—

Another clause should be that none of these twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty pounders may be suffered to marry, under the penalty of immediate deprivation, their marriages declared null, and their children bastards; for some desponding people take the kingdom to be in no condition of encouraging so numerous a breed of beggars.'

Others would add a clause of indulgence, that these reduced divines may be permitted to follow any lawful ways of living, which will not call them too often or too far from their spiritual offices. For example: they may be lappers of linen, bailiffs of the manor; they may let blood, or apply plasters for three miles round; they may get a dispensation to hold the clerkship and sextonship of their own parish *in commendam*. Their wives and daughters may make shirts for the neighbourhood; or, if a barrack be near, for the soldiers; in linen counties they may card and spin, and keep a few looms in the house; they may let lodgings, and sell a pot of ale without doors, but not at home, unless to sober company, and at regular hours.

Compare the above-cited passage of Swift with the following extract from Sydney Smith's Third Letter to Archdeacon Singleton:—

The whole plan of the Bishop of London is a ptochogony—a generation of beggars. He purposes out of the spoils of the Cathedral to create a thousand livings, and to give to the thousand clergymen 130*l.* per annum each. A Christian bishop proposing, in cold blood, to create a thousand livings of 130*l.* per annum each!—to call into existence a thousand of the most unhappy men on the face of the earth—the sons of the poor, without hope, without the assistance of private fortune, chained to the soil, ashamed to live with their inferiors, unfit for the society of the better class, and dragging about the English curse of poverty, without the smallest hope that they can ever shake it off! At present such livings are filled by young men who have better hopes—who have reason to expect good property—who look forward to a college or a family living—who are the sons of men of some substance, and hope to pass on to something better—who exist under the delusion of being hereafter Deans and Prebendaries—who are paid once by money and three times by hope.

Will the Bishop of London promise to the progeny of any of these thousand victims of the *Holy Innovation* that, if they behave well, one of them shall have his butler's place; another take care of the cedars and hyssops of his garden? Will he take their daughters for his nursery-maids? and may some of the sons of these 'labourers of the vineyard' hope one day to ride the leaders from St. James's to Fulham? Here is hope—here is room for ambition—a field for genius, and a ray of amelioration! If these beautiful feelings of compassion are throbbing under the cassock of the bishop, he ought in common justice to himself to make them known.

It is due alike to Swift and Sydney Smith to say that both were exemplary in the performance of the duties annexed to their ecclesiastical dignities, and that both considered those duties to include something more than mere formal observances. Swift appears to have given much attention to the business of his cathedral, and at length to have surmounted the prejudices of his Archbishop (King) and the resistance of his Chapter, 'as the rectitude of his intentions, and his disinterested zeal for the Church, became more and more evident. He soon,' adds Sir Walter Scott, 'obtained such authority that what he proposed was seldom disputed.' To the like effect the late Dean Milman testifies with regard to Sydney Smith at St. Paul's: 'I find traces of him in every particular of Chapter affairs; and on every occasion when his hand appears, I find stronger reason for respecting his sound judgment, knowledge of business, and activity of mind; above all, the perfect fidelity of his stewardship.' Both Swift and Sydney Smith were large in their charities, though both (Swift to an extreme point of parsimony) strict in their economy. The source of that economy was the same in both—a determined spirit of independence, struggling, at the outset, with narrow and adverse circumstances. Both were capable of acts of rare generosity, and both, as regarded personal bearing and oratorical powers, would have detracted nothing from the dignity of the episcopal bench had they attained that object of their equal ambition. All this is incontestable; yet, when all has been said, the 'Tale of a Tub' and the 'Letters of Peter Plymley' somehow don't read

episcopal. But we cannot doubt that many less worthy than Jonathan Swift or Sydney Smith to wear mitres have 'exalted their mitred fronts in courts and parliaments,' whether in England or Ireland.

'Sydney Smith,' says Lord Houghton, in his pleasant little volume of 'Monographs,' 'often spoke with much bitterness of the growing belief in three Sexes of Humanity—men, women, and clergymen; but for his part, he would not surrender his rightful share of interference in all the great human interests of his time.'

'It needs,' says Lord Houghton, 'no argument to prove that susceptibilities on the score of irreverence increase in proportion to the prevalence of doubt and scepticism. When essential facts cease to be incontrovertible, they are no longer safe for the humour of contrasts and analogies. It is thus that the secular use of scriptural allusion was more frequent in the days of simple belief in inspiration than in our times of linguistic and historical criticism. Phrases and figures were then taken as freely out of sacred as out of classical literature, and even characters as gross and ludicrous as some of Fielding's clergy were not looked upon as a satire against the Church. Thus when Sydney Smith illustrated his objections to always living in the country by saying that "he was in the position of the personage who, when he entered a village, straightway he found an ass,"—or described the future condition of Mr. Croker as "disputing with the recording Angel as to the dates of his sins"—or drew a picture of Sir George Cornwall Lewis in Hades, "for ever and ever book-less, essay-less, pamphlet-less, grammar-less, in vain imploring the Bishop of London, seated aloft, for one little treatise on the Greek article—one smallest dissertation on the verb in  $\mu$ ,"—it never occurred to him that he was doing anything more than taking the most vivid and familiar images as vehicles of his humour.'

There can be no question that 'the prevalence of doubt and scepticism' constrains the defenders of positive creeds to close their ranks, and desist from friendly chaffing at outposts with vedettes of the enemy. But is there not sometimes another effect of 'the prevalence of doubt and scepticism'? When these are in the air, are they not apt to infect, to a greater or less extent, the livelier spirits among the consecrated champions of orthodoxy? Voltaire calls Swift 'le

Rabelais de l'Angleterre,' and says of him, 'Il a l'honneur d'être prêtre, et de se moquer de tout, comme lui.' The incomparable irony of Swift's 'Argument against Abolishing Christianity' could only have found scope at a period when the audacity of unbelief might be considered as legitimatising the audacity of irony with which Swift encountered it. But it may be questioned whether a good deal of the spirit of the assailants does not animate such defenders, and whether the popular instinct is not, after all, right which, even on the plea of saving the Ark from falling, will not have it so handled.

One remaining marked resemblance between Swift and Sydney Smith was that each in his time stood forth a clerical champion of the political cause of Ireland. That cause in Swift's time included no recognition of even the existence of two millions, or thereabouts, of Irish Roman Catholic population; and that non-recognition has most absurdly been numbered amongst the political sins of Swift. But in Swift's day Irish Roman Catholics *had* no existence as a factor in English politics. James II. and Tyrconnel had annihilated for generations to come all chance of civil equality for Roman Catholics, whether in Ireland or England, by their insane conspiracy to use the wild Irish as armed auxiliaries against English Protestant liberties. Swift stood forward as champion of parliamentary and administrative autonomy for 'the English settled in Ireland,' drawing a hard and fast line of demarcation between them and the native 'Papists,' whom he described 'as being as inconsiderable in point of power as the women and children.' Not the less did the publication of his 'Drapier's Letters' raise for all Irishmen the first standard of self-assertion against mere Helot subjection to the selfish sway of English politicians and monopolists. Swift did not call the Irish Roman Catholics to his side; but they came without calling. The populace of Dublin were as warmly his allies as the parliamentary patriots of Stephen's Green. The ostensible cause of quarrel with Walpole's administration—Wood's halfpence—was, indeed, a trumpery one. But a Government which could im-

pose even a new copper coinage on its Irish subjects without consulting their representative and administrative authorities, could impose anything else. That was the substantial and, in the later 'Drapier's Letters,' the avowed ground of Swift's resistance to Walpole in the name of the constitutional rights of Irish subjects. And the cause that triumphed in 1724 by the sole power of Swift's pen was the cause that again triumphed in 1782, when backed by the whole formidable armed force of the Irish volunteers. Alike at both epochs the rights and wrongs of Irish Roman Catholics, as such, were left altogether out of account. But not the less was the Irish Roman Catholic cause indirectly included in what appeared the exclusively Protestant agitations of the eighteenth century. And the first successful Irish agitator was Swift. No Irishman, by his own avowal, though born in Ireland, but not the less an idolised Irish popular leader. No advocate of 'Catholic emancipation' (such advocacy would have been an anachronism), but not the less a precursor of Sydney Smith and Daniel O'Connell.

And now, what are we finally to say of Swift, the Writer and the Man, so far as the materials at present in our hands will carry us?

The first of Swift's critics whose judgment is of weight—Johnson in his 'Lives of the Poets'—while more lenient than some of those who have followed to his character as a man, appreciates less adequately his distinctive qualities as a writer. Boswell remarks that his 'guide, philosopher, and friend' showed also some disposition to depreciate Swift in conversation; and suggests as a possible, perhaps unconscious, source of prejudice against him, that Swift failed to exert, or at least exert successfully, his influence to obtain for Johnson an honorary degree of Master of Arts from Dublin University, when he was seeking, in his early struggles, an appointment as the head of a school. However that may have been, his inadequate appreciation of Swift seems sufficiently accounted for by the genius of the two men having had more points of mutual repulsion than attraction. Johnson finds Swift's distinguishing quality to have been good sense

rather than wit, humour, poetical fancy, or imagination! Such was his own distinguishing quality, and Swift doubtless also possessed it in large measure. But the wit and humour—we may add, the fancy and imagination—which Johnson was himself deficient in, he seems to have been unable adequately to appreciate in another. Swift never would have made (as Goldsmith said Johnson would have done) his ‘little fishes talk like great whales;’ and Johnson, who spoke slightly of ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ as if their main merit consisted in having hit on the idea of little men and big men, would have been incapable of carrying out that idea, had he himself hit on it, with that curious felicity which imparts such truth to fiction in the minute touches of Swift. There was not much more of poetry in Johnson’s soul than of humour. His verse, vigorous as it was, might be described as rhetoric in rhyme.

A biographer with far other power of sympathy (as being himself a poet) with the poetical sides of Swift’s genius was Scott. There is a tradition that Dryden, who was a kinsman of Swift, once said to him on some early attempts of his at high Pindaric flights, ‘Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet!’ One can imagine Rubens saying to his pupil, the elder Teniers, ere the latter deserted ‘high art’ and devoted himself to ‘Dutch drolleries:’ ‘Pupil David, you will never be a painter!’ But David made himself and his son into most effective painters, though neither of them painted fleshy Flemish Madonnas or fleshy Flemish chivalry. Swift could not have written ‘Alexander’s Feast;’ granted. Could Dryden have written ‘Cadenus and Vanessa,’ or the ‘Humble Petition of Frances Harris’? Had Swift stuck to Pindaric odes, and panegyrics in pompous rhyme on Sir William Temple, it may be admitted that he never would have been a poet. When he struck into his own peculiar vein of fancy and humour, he became one. It is not the choice of subjects familiar or elevated that confers the title of poet; it is the inspiration of the poetical breath of life into the subjects chosen, whatsoever they may be.

Sir Walter Scott suggests the only possible circumstance



which, 'as at present advised,' we can conceive admissible in part excuse of Swift's conduct to women. He suggests that disease, rather than selfishness, may have been, partly at least, to blame for that conduct. 'The continual recurrence of a distressing vertigo was gradually undermining his health. . . . He might seek the society of Vanessa without the apprehension of exciting passions to which he was himself insensible; and his separation from Stella after marriage might be a matter equally of choice or of necessity.'

It may here be observed that Scott assumes the fact of Swift's marriage to Stella. Mr. Forster sees no evidence for that marriage, and Scott admits that there is no direct evidence of it. All the evidence is circumstantial and traditional. For our own part, we attach less importance to the fact, as hitherto accredited, of a merely formal marriage, than to the question of motive of Swift's entire conduct towards the other party—and a third party concerned—previously and subsequently to that supposed event. We are not amongst those who regard marriage as an imperative part of the whole duty of man. But we are amongst those who think that men who abstain from marrying should abstain from philandering.<sup>1</sup> Had Swift been a Roman Catholic priest, his rôle, as regarded women, would have been easier. Some Spanish or Italian mother (we forget at this moment who) said to her son that, 'if he remained a layman, he must beware of women; if he became a priest, they must beware of him.' Swift sought to cumulate the priestly privilege with the lay license. Not license in the sense of profligacy, but, as we have said, of philandering. It was a license he had allowed himself from early manhood. Following out Sainte-Beuve's personal and physiological method of criticism, we should say that Swift's 'vice or weakness' (the great French critic adds, 'every man has such') was the not un-

<sup>1</sup> We must admit that 'philander' is a verb unrecognised by Johnson or Webster. We turned, therefore, for it to a quarter where the most out-of-the-way English words are sure to be found—an English-German Dictionary. In Flügel's Dictionary, 'to philander' is Germanised as '*Den Schächer spielen, liebeln, den Vertrauten machen*'—precisely the ways with women of which we complain in Swift.

common one of a self-indulgent propensity to engage female sympathy, without making the return for that sympathy demanded by female affection. And on that point, *habemus confitentem reum*. In a letter written before he took orders Swift replied as follows to some advice of a Leicester clergyman, whom he calls his 'good cousin,' referring to certain recent passages of love-making with one of his female acquaintances there. He wrote that

As to marriage, he does not belong to the kind of persons, of whom he has known a great number, that ruin themselves by it. A thousand household thoughts always drive matrimony out of his mind whenever it chances to come there; and *his own cold temper and unconfined humour* are of themselves a greater hindrance than any fear of that which is the subject of his friend's letter. 'I am naturally temperate; and never engaged in the contrary, which usually produces those effects.' At the same time he admits he has failings that might lead people, in regard to such matters, to suppose him serious, while he had no other design other than to entertain himself when idle, or when something went amiss in his affairs; a thing, indeed, so common with him, that *he could remember twenty women in his life to whom he had behaved himself just the same way*. 'I shall speak plainly to you,' he added. And then came words which certainly foreshadow, if they do not make intelligible, the fate that was to join his name so strangely, through all future time, to that of her who then lived under the same roof with him, a child of ten years old. 'The very ordinary observations I made with going half a mile beyond the University have taught me experience enough not to think of marriage till I settle my fortune in the world, which I am sure will not be in some years; and *even then I am so hard to please myself, that I suppose I shall put it off to the other world.*'<sup>1</sup>

That habit of indecisive, inconclusive gallantry to amuse idle time—which, as we have seen, Swift wrote that 'should he enter the Church, he would not find it hard to lay down in the porch'—he did not lay down in the porch, but carried into years of mature clerical manhood, when it had lost the excuse—whatever that might be worth—of thoughtlessness. Swift, like Goethe, was exceedingly susceptible of female influences, but, like Goethe, reserved an interior self, which

<sup>1</sup> Forster's *Life*, pp. 64, 65.

remained impassible to them. Each exerted the powers of pleasing which each possessed to attract female affections, which neither was prepared to reciprocate to the extent of undivided devotion to one object; and the result in both cases was what we must call tragical. Swift had to complain, in his later joyless years, that his female friends had forsaken him,<sup>1</sup> and Goethe—after tearing himself loose from an honourable love on very small motives—suffered a woman every way his inferior, whom he himself acknowledged to be a ‘poor creature,’ to throw herself into his arms unconditionally, and fasten for life her vulgarity on the ultra-refinement of his studiously composed existence.<sup>2</sup> Such were the fruits, in each case, of over-calculation or over-fastidiousness—in short, selfishness. In Swift’s case there is still an element of mystery, for the solution of which, if any more complete solution is possible, we have some right to look, and shall look with curiosity and interest, to the sequel of Mr. Forster’s vigorous and sympathetic Apologia for the genius and character of the extraordinary man he has made his subject.

In the meanwhile let us just remind those who, while enjoying Swift the writer, are unmeasured in their denunciations of Swift the man, that had not the man been what he was, the world never would have possessed the writer. If Swift had been a model of clerical decorum, the ‘Tale of a Tub’ must have remained unwritten; as, for that matter, so must ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ had Swift continued a staunch

<sup>1</sup> In one of Swift’s later letters to Pope (February 7, 1736) we find the following passage, which is not without its pathos:—‘What vexes me most is, that my female friends, who could bear me very well a dozen of years ago, have now forsaken me, although I am not so old in proportion to them as I formerly was; which I can prove by arithmetic, for then I was double their age, which now I am not.’

<sup>2</sup> Of all who have written, and written well on Goethe’s relations to women, the only one we have met with who performs fearlessly the whole moral anatomy of the man is Mr. R. H. Hutton, in his *Literary Essays*, Mr. Hutton is of opinion that Goethe really loved Christiane Vulpius, whom, after cohabiting with her seventeen years, he married. If he did love her, it was a love compatible with slight esteem, and with tolerance of slight esteem of others for its object.

and satisfied Whig. The popular resurrection of Ireland would not have dated from the 'Drapier's Letters,' had not Walpole held Swift, like Bolingbroke, at arm's length, under the first Georges. 'Prince Posterity' must take the lot with all faults, and perhaps has no bad bargain.

We may say in conclusion, that Mr. Forster is almost the first of Swift's biographers or critics who takes real pains to explore all the sources of fresh information on his subject which have been opened to him by others, or which personal research and inquiry have opened for himself. Johnson slighted Mr. Deane Swift's offer to aid him with family traditions and documents. Scott worked up very readably into his short Memoir all the materials which came readily to hand, but does not seem to have thought it worth while to look far afield for more matter than he could bring within the compass of that Memoir. Jeffrey, in his essay on Swift, which he twice reprinted from his Review, did his worst to wash on again the party blacking which he thought Scott had been rather too disposed to wash off the character of a Whig convert to Toryism. Macaulay and Thackeray had their own political and literary humours to vent at Swift's expense; and both, as regarded facts, were content with that *à-peu-près* which was Sainte-Beuve's special horror, and with which, we may add, Mr. Forster is much too thorough-going in his championship of Swift's good fame to content himself. We must refer our readers to the preface of his present volume for the long list of tributaries, noble, reverend, collegiate, lettered, and bibliopolic from whom Mr. Forster acknowledges aids, or access to aids, in the shape of original documents illustrative of his subject which had hitherto been buried from the public eye in private repositories.

Swift has undergone the fate of all men whose characters have exhibited very pronounced features, rendered more pronounced and more unpleasing by age. He has been viewed at his worst. After his death, as before it, his genius has suffered sorrowful eclipse in misanthropy and mania. There seems to have been something the matter with his

head almost all through his life; and the final autopsy revealed hydrocephalus. But, as inveterate readers of Swift, we are grateful to Mr. Forster for reminding the world that in Swift's better days he had something else than water on the brain, or misanthropy in the heart. Swift, the author, must ever rank amongst the perennial honours of English literature; and the work before us, when completed, will, we are confident, place Swift the man—if not on so lofty a moral pedestal as seems designed for him by his biographer—at least in a position to engage a larger share of human sympathy than has hitherto been accorded him by the common run of readers, a generation of whom it may be said, at the present day, that they know not Jonathan.

## IV.

## JUNIUS AND FRANCIS.

1. *The Identity of Junius with a distinguished Living Character Established* Including the Supplement, consisting of Facsimiles of Handwriting and other Illustrations. By JOHN TAYLOR. Second Edition. Corrected and Enlarged. London, 1818.
2. *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, K.C.B. With Correspondence and Journals.* Commenced by the late JOSEPH PARKES, Esq. Completed and Edited by HERMAN MERIVALE, M.A. In two Vols. London, 1867.
3. *More about Junius. The Franciscan Theory unsound.* By A. HAYWARD, Esq., Q.C.
4. *The Handwriting of Junius Professionally Investigated.* By Mr. CHARLES CHABOT, Expert. With Preface and Collateral Evidence. By the Hon. EDWARD TWISLETON. London, 1871.
5. *The Last Phase in the Junius Controversy.* By HERMAN MERIVALE. *Cornhill Magazine*, June 1871.<sup>1</sup>

[MR. GEORGE TREVELYAN, in the lively and interesting first instalment of his new 'History of Fox,' refers with just appreciation to the late Mr. Herman Merivale as 'an author who has written only too little and too unambitiously,' and whose completion of the memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, commenced by the late Joseph Parkes, 'has virtually set at rest the [Junian] controversy, that once threatened to be eternal.' In view of any yet possible galvanic resurrection of that controversy, it may not be useless, and cannot now be indiscreet, to extract the following observations from a private letter addressed by Mr. Merivale to the present writer so long back as April 1868.

'The real case for Francis consists in the extraordinary *multitude* of coincidences, not in the strength of each.

If I said that the committer of a crime as to which I was giving evidence had black hair, it would prove nothing; that he had one eye, not much; that he spoke Irish, but little; that he limped—that

<sup>1</sup> From the *Westminster Review*, October 1871.

he stooped—small matters; but if it was shown that a black-haired, one-eyed, stooping, limping Irishman was in the way at the time, it would go very hard with the said Irishman. And so with Francis.

As to Smith's 'Temple' theory, I have always regarded the following as a certain 'mark' in the controversy. The style of Junius is stiff and unnatural, but it is very masterly. *Ergo*, it is not of a conclusive order of proof to compare it with the natural styles of other men. Many *good* writers might perhaps have written Junius. Even *inferior* writers (in their natural style) might have done so. But no *very bad writer* could possibly have written Junius. Now if any one, with these canons in his mind, will look at a few of Lord Temple's letters at the end of vol. iv. of the Grenville Correspondence, I think he will say at once that the theory of Lord Temple is impossible. The same course of reasoning makes Lord G. Sackville impossible. On the other hand, the Duke of Richmond *might* have written Junius, and he almost alone of the noble lords of the time. And strange to say, there are more quaint coincidences in favour of the Duke of Richmond than of any other high-placed candidate, though he has never been publicly suggested.']

It really seems high time the ghost of Junius were finally laid, and the perturbed spirit of Francis consigned to such rest as it can be conceived capable of enjoying in any sphere. The lapse of a century is rather trying to the surviving interest in any reputation, political or literary, not of the very first class. When Mr. John Taylor, the first discoverer and promulgator of the 'Franciscan theory,' addressed himself to the subject, rather better than half a century back, the question of the authorship of 'Junius' had a living political interest, and the author, then first disinterred from his self-dug sepulchre, was a living, though retired public man. No one now looks back to the politics of the last century with the sort or degree of interest which was still felt in those politics fifty or sixty years back. No one now expects to see 'Junius Identified with a Distinguished Living Character.' Half a century hence, the question of the identity of Junius with any person whatever will, in all probability, have ceased to excite any other than antiquarian curiosity. The general reader will no more think it due to his character to show himself well up in the topics of the 'Letters of Junius' than he cares now to do in those of Addison's 'Freeholders,' or Bolingbroke's 'Craftsmen.'

As yet, however, the final solution of the Junian mystery is a subject which has not wholly lost its attractiveness, at least to students of political history and literature.

When all the pros and cons of a long-vexed question have seemed fairly exhausted, some minute point may happen to strike the critical eye as of more decisive import than the greater portion of the entire mass of previous evidence which had hitherto failed to bring the controversy to a close. Such a point, which we have not seen singled out for notice in any previous handling of this controversy, has caught our eye, and irresistibly riveted our attention, in running over the private letters (which were first published in the Chatham Correspondence) from Calcraft to Lord Chatham in 1771. A couple of very singularly-worded sentences contained in those letters—collated with a couple of strangely coincident sentences in a letter of Junius of *later date*, and read by the light of a not less remarkable passage lately published by Mr. Merivale in the Appendix to the first volume of the ‘Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis,’ go farther, in our judgment, than much of the evidence besides brought to bear on the question to identify the writer of the private communications to Chatham with the writer of the published Letter of Junius above referred to, and to identify both with Francis. But we must crave our readers’ patience for some brief introduction of this hitherto unnoticed piece of evidence.

The difficulty of conceiving how the ‘Junius’ secret should have been kept so long of course increases in proportion to the degree of prominence and importance in public life of whatever person it might be proposed to fix with the authorship. There is, on the other hand, an almost equal difficulty in supposing the author *not* to have been a man of some mark in politics; because it is difficult, on that supposition, to account for his extensive and minute political knowledge. ‘The peculiar position,’ observes Mr. Merivale, ‘of Francis as a subordinate official, in close connection with the higher world, unknown himself and knowing much, certainly does much towards evading the cogency of this dilemma.’



Francis and Junius, we think, can plainly be shown to have both been political adventurers, whose hopes of political fortune were embarked, at a particular point of time, in the same bottom, and led both strenuously to exert themselves for the overthrow of the Grafton ministry of 1768. As an anticipated consequence of that overthrow, Francis and Junius can both be shown to have speculated on the restoration of Lord Chatham to power, in renewed alliance with his family connections, the 'Grenville Brothers.'

Philip Francis in his earlier youth had for a short time acted as amanuensis of Lord Chatham (then Mr. Pitt). At the point of time we are now about to refer to, from 1768 to 1771, Junius was delivering his tremendous broadsides against the Grafton ministry. Francis, we shall see, was building on Lord Chatham's anticipated triumphant return to power ambitious hopes of rising from a clerkship in the War Office to some higher position under the patronage of the great Earl, who was then heading the Opposition in renewed alliance with the 'Grenville Brothers.' We shall presently find proofs in Junius's private letters to Lord Chatham and Mr. George Grenville that *he* too was actuated with similar hopes from the same quarters.

'The gout and the Grenvilles' (to borrow a phrase from Lord Stanhope's History) may be said without exaggeration to have been the main Marplots in the politics of the first decade of the Third George's reign. The stubborn adherence of Lord Temple to what might be termed the Grenville 'family compact' had prevented Pitt—then the Great Commoner—from returning to the head of the Government upon George Grenville's first enforced resignation in 1765. And when, the year after, Pitt (first choosing to put a coronet on his head) acted on the view of policy bluntly articulated by Lord Camden, '*Let him fling off the Grenvilles, and save the nation without them*'—the ex-Great Commoner was unhappily no longer in a condition to save the nation; not because he had changed his popular name, and left his popular arena, the House of Commons, but because that formidable factor, *suppressed gout*, had come in to perplex all

calculations on his political ascendancy. For a year and a half that mysterious malady entirely suspended his personal action in the cabinet formed by himself, kept him wholly withdrawn from all business whatever, and rendered him incapable even of the effort of will required for resigning the power he was utterly impotent for the time to wield. The Duke of Grafton's premiership, which his own temporary incapacity to hold the helm had rendered (by his own avowal and advice to the King) the only pilotage at the helm available for the time being, soon became as much a stumbling-block and rock of offence to the elder Pitt as, thirty years afterwards, the Addington ministry became to the younger, when he found it stopping too effectually (in the Royal mind at least) the gap made by his absence. The vigour the great Earl had utterly lost in power he completely regained in opposition. The weak Grafton ministry was soon overthrown by the strong combination formed against it, but was replaced, not by the restored ascendancy of Lord Chatham, but by the formation of a new ministry under Lord North, which proved more lasting than was expected either by its friends or enemies.

The medium through whom Francis was brought in close though indirect *rapport* with Lord Chatham, at the epoch above mentioned, was Calcraft. Calcraft was a pushing subaltern politician of that day, who had a seat in Parliament, mixed politics with money-lending transactions, army contracting, and fast life about town ;<sup>1</sup> and—at the epoch when

<sup>1</sup> We extract the following curious and amusing particulars respecting Calcraft from Mr. Parkes's first chapter of the *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* :—

'Mr. John Calcraft, though placed early in life in the civil service, and filling secondary offices in different administrations, could not be considered as a leading political man of his time. But his experience in public life, his early acquired wealth, his natural sagacity, and great borough interest invested him with a considerable share of personal influence and power, especially as he sat successively in several Parliaments. . . . He ultimately gave up office to form an army agency and quasi-banking establishment. Noblemen of the highest rank consulted him on their private and domestic affairs; and he was liberal in giving temporary accommodation to all his connections in need of pecuniary aid. . . . Whatever his earlier political relations to parties (he had been a confidential partisan of Henry Fox, the

Chatham openly assumed in the Upper House the lead of the Opposition to his previous creatures and colleagues of the Grafton ministry—took on himself the part of jackal or lion's provider of political intelligence to the great Earl in his intervals of Achillean seclusion. As Calcraft was lion's provider to Chatham, so Francis was jackal's provider to Calcraft. And the young jackal's provider, as we shall presently see, was not less eager than the old jackal—nay, more so, as he had the fabric of his fortune to raise from the ground—to lend his hand—an anonymous hand in all its lendings—for the overthrow of the Grafton and the elevation of a new Chatham Cabinet on its ruins. Junius was working with all his might at the same time to the same purpose. And that the great unknown was working *from the same motive* as the little unknown, is to our eyes not less evident from the anonymous letters privately sent by Junius to Lord Chatham and Mr. George Grenville.

We extract from a very curious and characteristic 'Fragment of Autobiography,' printed by Mr. Merivale in the Appendix to the first volume of the *Memoirs of Francis*,

first Lord Holland, when minister), he attached himself lastly to Lord Chatham in opposition; he reconciled that passionate and haughty nobleman to his brother-in-law, Lord Temple; and his last votes were, after 1770, invariably given in favour of the liberty of the subject and Parliamentary Reform; he publicly bailed the victims of a persecuted press when a crusade was preached against political publishers; and his purse was always at their service for defence.'

Mr. Calcraft cumulated the character of active politician with that of fine gentleman—according to the acceptance of that title in those times.

'In middle and after life he was in "gay" society a gallant, and frequented the green-rooms. He was behind the scenes not only of Downing Street but of the London theatres, and celebrated in scandalous chronicles as for some time one of the "protectors" of the celebrated George Anne Bellamy, one of the most attractive and popular actresses of her day. Her extravagant expense and debts, however, compelled Mr. Calcraft to separate from her, and the lady had her revenge in the publication of her so-called *Memoirs*. For some time this lady did the honours of Mr. Calcraft's table, his "good dinners" being frequented by many leading political and literary men. Dr. Francis was frequently one of the guests, as was occasionally his son. The Doctor, as a divine, and intimate friend of Mr. Calcraft, received his share of abuse in the *Memoirs*. The actress had played the principal female characters in Dr. Francis's unsuccessful tragedies, and therefore she had materials for her abuse and ridicule of the reputed author.'

the following paragraphs, which throw a perfectly clear light on Francis's personal views, and his active co-operation with Calcraft at the epoch above described.

'I had no hope of advancement,' says Francis, 'but on the line of Opposition. I was sincere, though mistaken in my politics, and was convinced the (Grafton) ministry could never stand the consequences of the Middlesex election. As soon as there was the prospect of a rupture between Lord Chatham and the Duke of Grafton, Calcraft made it his business to reconcile the Brothers (George Grenville and Lord Temple), and effected his purpose by convincing them that their mutual interests required it . . . To his industry and activity the Opposition were in some measure indebted for the formidable appearance they made in the beginning of the year 1770, when Chatham, Camden, and Granby resigned, when York put an end to his life, when Grafton abandoned the Government, and North succeeded to what I believe he himself and every man in the kingdom at that time thought a forlorn hope.

'Notwithstanding the famous protest of forty-two lay lords and all Chatham's eloquence, Calcraft and I soon saw that the game was lost with respect to Opposition in general, but we still thought it possible that Chatham might be sent for alone. On the approach of a rupture with Spain about the Falkland Islands, these hopes revived. Chatham came forward again, and attacked the ministry with wonderful eloquence. I took down from memory the famous speech he made on the 22nd of November, 1770, and had it published in a few days. It had a great effect abroad, and alarmed or offended the ministry so much that they determined to shut the doors of the House of Lords against all strangers, even members of the other House . . . Still, however, we thought a Spanish war inevitable, and that Lord Chatham must be employed. Lord Weymouth in that conviction resigned the Secretary of State's office, *and I lost 500*l.* in the stocks.* The Convention with Spain sunk me and my hopes to a lower state than ever. If Lord Chatham had come in I might have commanded anything, and could not but have risen under his protection.'

The passages in Calcraft's letters to Lord Chatham at this crisis, which are printed in the 'Chatham Correspondence'<sup>1</sup> within inverted commas, indicate intelligence and

<sup>1</sup> The traceable connection of some parts of the Chatham Correspondence (published in 1838-40) with the Junian mystery was remarked by the editor of the Grenville Papers (published in 1852-3), but remarked only in fanciful reference to Lord Temple, to whom that editor thought he saw reason to

suggestions forwarded by him to Lord Chatham *not as his own*, but as supplied to him by an anonymous correspondent in the background. Now every concurrent circumstance points to Francis as that anonymous correspondent.\* He has himself told us of his active co-operation with Calcraft, which could only, it would seem, be exercised in some such channel of covert communication. He has told us how he busied himself in reporting Lord Chatham, and there cannot be a doubt, from his indefatigable use of the pen, that he equally busied himself in reporting to Lord Chatham whatever could furnish the great Earl with the most telling topics of Opposition. Indeed, he has himself further told us in another passage of his autobiography, that, on one occasion, he drew up a legal argument on an Opposition topic of the day, and sent it to Calcraft, desiring him to transmit it to *his friend*. ‘Within three days after,’ adds Francis, ‘I heard the great Earl of Chatham repeat my letter *verbatim* in the House of Lords, not only following the argument exactly, but dressing it in the same expressions that I had done. His speech the next day flamed in the newspapers, and ran through the kingdom.’

Amongst these anonymous communications made at this crisis through Calcraft to Lord Chatham, and which all the circumstances concur to indicate as having been made by Francis, there occur the following singularly worded sentences on a question on which the Opposition built sanguine hopes of overthrowing the Ministry (and on which, as we have seen, Francis lost 500*l.* by gambling in the funds), the question, namely, of the rights and wrongs of Spain and England in the matter of the Falkland Islands imbroglio.

If there had been *one spark of shame*, a single atom of honour in the composition of our ministry, war was inevitable. Look to your-

ascribe the famous Junius Letters. The following citation is made from the Introductory Notes to the third volume of those papers :—

‘A continual interchange of very intimate correspondence and communication was kept up during the years 1769, 1770, and 1771, between Mr. Calcraft, Lord and Lady Chatham, and Lord Temple, and it will appear that in many instances the information conveyed in this correspondence coincided with that used by Junius in his public letters, as well as in his private notes to Woodfall.’

selves, you gentlemen who have something to lose! The ministry *have views of conquest, though not over the enemies of England.*

These remarkable sentences were transmitted by Calcraft to Lord Chatham, as from a private anonymous hand, on January 21, 1771. Nine days after the date of this private communication to Chatham, on January 30, 1771, appeared a letter of Junius, containing the following extraordinarily exact coincidences with it in sentiment and expression.

In his royal breast there is no room left for resentment, no place for hostile sentiments against the natural enemies of his crown. No, sir, if any ideas of strife and hostility have entered the royal mind, they have a very different direction. *The enemies of England have nothing to fear from them.*

I mean to violate all the laws of probability, when I suppose that this imaginary king, after having voluntarily disgraced himself in the eyes of his subjects, might return to a sense of his dishonour—that he might perceive the snare laid for him by his ministers, and feel a *spark of shame* kindling in his breast.

It would seem inconceivable that such exact coincidences of sentiment and expression could proceed from two different pens—from two different minds—separately and independently employed on the same subject. It would seem that whoever was the writer of the private communication to Chatham, must also have been the writer of the published letters of Junius. An unbiassed literary detective, stumbling on two such passages, could scarcely fail to regard them as products of one mind and of one hand. Now to what mind and to what hand are these anonymous communications to Chatham traceable with anything like an equal degree of probability as to those of Francis?

‘That Junius,’ says Mr. Merivale, ‘can only be described with truth as a political adventurer there is no doubt. It is plain enough that his personal success in life was involved in that of the party whose cause he adopted, or, to speak still more accurately, in the fall of the party which he attacked. And it is equally true that he was utterly unscrupulous in the use of means; that his sincerity, even when he was sincere, was apt to assume the form of the most ignoble rancour; and that no ties of friendship, or party, or connection seem

to have restrained his virulence. All this is but too deducible from the published anonymous writings only. And the conclusions to which the sentiments and conduct of Francis would lead us, as evinced in his manuscript remains, are assuredly much the same.'

Two private letters, signed only with the initial 'C'—addressed by the writer of the 'Letters of Junius' to Lord Chatham, and three private letters addressed by the same writer to Mr. George Grenville—have been laid before the public—in the 'Chatham Correspondence' and the 'Grenville Papers'—since the date of Mr. Taylor's inquiry as to the 'Junius' authorship. These letters indicate—firstly, the same predilection for George Grenville's policy, especially as regarded the question of the principle—first raised under his ministry—of imperial authority over the colonies in fiscal as in all other matters; and secondly, the same desire to promote—in opposition to the supposed secret councils of the royal closet, and the supposed 'something behind the throne, greater than the throne itself'—either a Grenville combination or a Chatham autocracy, which are manifested either directly or indirectly in Junius's published letters of the succeeding years, and which, as we have seen, coincided with the objects of Opposition contemplated by Philip Francis.

The secret and confidential communications above-mentioned made by the Great Anonymous to two public men connected by family ties, and likely to be connected again by political ties in the future as they had been in the past, bear every mark of the hand of an upward-struggling political aspirant, seeking to recommend himself to public men whose future patronage might raise him out of some comparatively humble and obscure position, in recompense of services rendered in the press and zeal manifested by the pen. From the whole complexion of Junius's first letter to George Grenville, Mr. Parkes drew the natural inference that the writer was calculating on Mr. Grenville's early return to office, and that, 'besides the conscientious advocacy of the ex-Premier's political interest, the writer was not unnaturally laying claim to participation in the future sweets of some secondary office or official berth better than the one he may have then enjoyed.'

The editor of the Grenville Papers indeed, Mr. W. J. Smith, in his zeal to vindicate for Lord Temple the equivocal honour of the authorship of the Junius Letters, has laboured to show that that cantankerous politician, writing privately and anonymously to *his brother*, George Grenville, might have adopted the style of an obscure candidate for political favour with a view of putting him off the scent of the fraternal source of the published Letters. To cap the climax of absurdity in his zealous identification of Junius with Lord Temple, Mr. Smith further sought to identify the handwriting of Junius with Lady Temple's, thereby incurring the further improbability that letters sent to near relatives, to divert suspicion of anonymous authorship from the *Lord*, should have been sent to those near relatives in the recognisable handwriting of his *Lady*. The closest parallel to this rare device for preserving secrecy seems that of the conspirators in Canning's 'Rovers,' who seek to conceal themselves by singing a patriotic song in full chorus.

We should ourselves have the greatest difficulty in believing that Junius was any man of habits of aristocratic fastidiousness or indolence—habits less likely to have prompted or sustained the activity of his restless and reckless pen than to have suggested the employment for patrician ends of the plebeian pens of others. Whoever Junius was, it may, with strong probability, be affirmed that he was not the man of lofty independence of character and position—of mature age and experience—he thought fit to affect to be, with laboured and ostentatious frequency, in his Letters. It is astonishing how an affectation so transparent—a literary artifice so hackneyed—should have imposed on so many successive investigators of the 'Junian mystery.' This is still more astonishing since the publication of the Chatham and Grenville Papers.

The latest, and it must be added, most formidable impugner of 'the Franciscan theory,' Mr. Hayward, strongly insists on the improbability that Calcraft and Lord Barrington—both attacked by Junius—should either of them have been attacked by Francis, who owed to both very great



personal obligations. Now it must be admitted that there is a real difficulty on this point with regard to Calcraft. It is, on the one hand, difficult to conceive how, if Francis were Junius, Calcraft should have been kept in ignorance of the fact; or how, on the other hand, supposing Calcraft cognisant of his *protégé's* authorship, that *protégé* should have ventured to touch, as Junius did, some of the tenderest points in his patron's character and position, albeit he only touched those points in passing.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Merivale meets as follows this *primâ facie* strong objection to the Franciscan theory.

The abuse of Calcraft by Junius was probably a blind as regards the public, though, as it happens, it expressed the inmost sentiments of Francis [*vide* on this point the ungrateful commemoration of Calcraft in the 'Fragment of Autobiography'], who must have felt that peculiar joy which none but the private lampooner knows, in finding that his associate received as a pretence what was meant in spiteful earnest. But the supposition remains a supposition only—nothing left by Calcraft, nothing left by Francis, exists to confirm it; and one other hypothesis is certainly conceivable, namely, that Francis professed to Calcraft that he knew the author of Junius, but was bound not to divulge his name, and that Calcraft acquiesced from not wishing to lose the services of so valuable an auxiliary.

Either of the above-cited suppositions derives probability from the mingled daring and dissimulation that belonged to Francis's character. And it may be worth noting that precisely the like apparent inconsistency is to be found between Junius's public attacks on Lord Chatham and Junius's private communications to the great Earl—the last of which was signed with that redoubtable *nom de guerre* which Lord Chatham could not but associate with previous by no means measured and by no means flattering animadversions on himself. Very subtle men seem sometimes, through very subtlety, insensible to their own moral contradictions. And a writer

<sup>1</sup> Take the following specimen cited by Mr. Hayward from Junius's letter to the printer of the *Public Advertiser* of October 5, 1771:—'I willingly accept of a sarcasm from Colonel Barré, or a simile from Mr. Burke. Even the silent vote of Mr. Calcraft is worth reckoning in a division. What though he riots in the plunder of the army (Calcraft was an army contractor), and has only determined to be a patriot when he could not be a peer.'

like Junius—we may add, a writer like Francis—in the variability of his own feelings towards eminent public personages, may not have always taken into due account the retentiveness of *their* memories.

As regards Lord Barrington, it seems to us that the whole difficulty is created by a confusion of dates. Mr. Hayward cites friendly letters from Lord Barrington, addressed to Francis in India in 1777—*i.e.*, four or five years after Lord Barrington had helped Francis to his Indian appointment. But the disgust which Francis, if identical with Junius, must be supposed to have conceived, from some cause or other, against Lord Barrington was of more than five years earlier date, at a time when Lord Barrington, in the opinion of Calcraft (presumably therefore also in that of Francis), had inflicted on the latter what he could not fail to have felt at the moment as a mortifying *passe-droit* in War Office promotion.<sup>1</sup>

The Deputy Secretaryship of War, to which an outsider,

<sup>1</sup> With reference to this incident, which turned out of decisive consequence to the whole of Francis's subsequent career, Francis and Junius are brought in striking, but as it seems to us natural juxtaposition in the following note of the editor of the *Chatham Correspondence* (Vol. iv. p. 195.)

'On the 10th January 1772, Junius announced in the *Public Advertiser*, that Mr. D'Oyley had resigned his post as Under-Secretary at War, and that till a proper person belonging to the junto could be spared, Mr. Bradshaw was to be stationed in the War Office. On the 12th, Mr. Calcraft wrote to Almon—"If you put in paragraphs, put that *Mr. Francis* is appointed Deputy Secretary at War. It will tease the worthy Secretary, and oblige me." And again on the 18th—"I knew *Francis* was not Deputy, but wished him to be so, and to cram the newspapers with paragraphs that he was so; for he is very deserving." On the 25th, *Junius* privately informs Woodfall that "the —— Barrington has just appointed Chamier, a French broker, his Deputy, for no reason but his relationship to Bradshaw." On the 20th March, *Mr. Francis* was removed from (qu. resigned) his situation in the War Office, and on the same day Mr. Calcraft added a codicil to his will, bequeathing him the sum of 1,000*l.*, and an annuity of 250*l.* for life to Mrs. Francis. On the 23rd March, *Junius*, under the signature of "Veteran," says, "I desire you will inform the public that the worthy Lord Barrington, not contented with having driven Mr. D'Oyley out of the War Office, has at last contrived to expel *Mr. Francis*." In May, *Junius* dropped all correspondence, public and private, with Woodfall, until January 1773. In May, *Mr. Francis* left England, on a continental tour, from which he returned early in January 1773, on the 19th of which month is dated the last private letter of Junius to Woodfall. Mr. Francis was shortly after appointed a member of the Supreme Council in Bengal, with a salary of 10,000*l.* a year, and in the spring of 1774 sailed for India.'

Mr. Chamier, was appointed over his head, seems to have been a promotion to which Francis thought himself entitled from his efficient services as First Clerk in that office; and nothing but a feeling of disgust and hopelessness on being passed over in the filling up of that appointment can, it would seem, account for his sudden retirement from a post which, subordinate as it was, was his sole bread-winner for a young and increasing family. Francis, indeed, affected to write on the occasion to a relative in Ireland that he had been *offered* the Deputy Secretaryship by Lord Barrington; but there was enough of pride and enough of dissimulation in Francis's character to justify us in taking that assertion *cum grano salis*. He may fairly be suspected of taking a bit of a leaf from his friend and patron's book, and pretending an offer where Calcraft, as we have seen, had roundly affirmed an appointment. Whether or no Lord Barrington had any suspicion of the identity of his new assailant in the press (since identified with Junius, but who cautiously published his fierce attacks on the War Secretary for the 'expulsion' of D'Oyley and Francis under the alias of 'Veteran') with his late effective and estranged subordinate at the War Office, can only be matter for conjecture. What is however certain is, that Francis, on accidentally hearing that one of the appointments to the Council of Bengal, under Lord North's new Indian Regulation Act, was 'going a begging,' at once applied himself, with that 'healthy hardihood' which on no occasion of life ever failed him, to his late chief at the War Office—the 'silken courtier,' the 'bloody Barrington,' of Junius and 'Veteran'—to solicit his powerful official interest for the new appointment. The circumstances and results of this application are described as follows in his Autobiographical Fragment:—

It was in vain that I shut my eyes to my situation. Wherever I went, or whatever I did, the spectre haunted and pursued me. Mr. Alexander Macrabie (Francis's brother-in-law) was lately returned from America. He had purchased a thousand acres for me in Pennsylvania, where I meant to secure a retreat for myself and my family if ever England should cease to be the seat of freedom. The question now seriously agitated in my mind was whether I ought not to trans-

plant myself at once, and take possession of this establishment, before my little capital was exhausted. This was actually the subject of a dismal conversation between Macrabie and me on the fourth of June, when we accidentally met with a gentleman in the Park, who informed me that John Cholwell, one of the intended Commissioners for India, had declined the nomination. I immediately went to D'Oyley, who wrote to Grey Cooper. It was the King's birthday, and Barrington was gone to Court. I saw him the next morning. As soon as I had explained everything to him, he wrote the handsomest and strongest letter imaginable in my favour to Lord North. Other interests contributed, but I owe my success to Lord Barrington. It was remarkably fortunate for me that Cholwell had deferred his resignation to so late a day. The Registration Bill had been for some days before the House of Commons. If the Minister had had more time to look about him I should probably have been defeated by some superior interest.

Too much, perhaps, has been made of the 'mystery' of this Indian appointment of Francis. Lord Barrington, without exploring the source of the attacks made on him in the press, may have been rendered sensible by them of having done Francis some injustice, and the more ready therefore to respond to the personal application of his late subordinate, for his interest with the Prime Minister for the Indian appointment. Fortune favours the bold, and Francis's intrepid solicitation for that appointment, just at the nick of time, when the exigency had become pressing to fill it up, was amongst those chances of which the French proverb holds good—'*Ces hasards sont pour ceux qui jouent bien.*'

'One of the strongest reasons,' said Lord Macaulay, in his essay on Warren Hastings, 'for believing that Francis was Junius, is the moral resemblance between the two characters.' It is surely a coincidence somewhat strongly confirmatory of all the other coincidences between those two characters, or double manifestations of one character, that so soon after the one political meteor sunk below the horizon in London, the other rose above the horizon at Calcutta. As Junius had for years been 'with fear of change perplexing monarchs' and ministers, so Francis was for years with fear of change to perplex viceroys and their satellites. The *labor improbus*—vehement and pertinacious pursuit of a determined

object—vigour of purpose and vice of temper were the same in both spheres and in both characters. There was the same element of public spirit in both, but of public spirit alloyed with private animosity and personal interest. The first period of Francis's active life had closed just when Junius's letters closed, with the final disappointment of a somewhat low-pitched ambition, which had nourished the hope of rising by aid of exalted patronage. During its second period, Francis was struggling in his own strength, and in his own name, for an object of higher ambition, no less indeed than the viceroyal sway of India. The same fierce impulse to wage war *à outrance* with office-holders, and take power by storm, which had animated Junius against the Grafton ministry, fired Francis against the Indian autocracy of Warren Hastings. From the second theatre of that lifelong war with power (and *for* power), which seemed a necessity of his nature from early manhood to advanced age, Francis had to retire with no other immediate result of his six years' incessant Indian conflict than a bullet through his body from the duelling pistol of Hastings, after the fashion of political satisfaction in those days. He had to bide his time for another unsatisfying satisfaction, as it turned out in the end—the parliamentary impeachment of his returning enemy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There was an incident of Francis's private life in India, given in detail by Mr. Merivale, in which he came off not less damaged in purse and moral repute than he afterwards did in person from Hastings's pistol. This was an intrigue, which Francis himself refers to in his private correspondence as a 'wretched business,' with a fair lady of East Indian birth, afterwards married (though Papal sanction was refused the marriage) to the famous ex-episcopal statesman and diplomatist, Talleyrand. That not even scandal—not even scandal judicially attested—is immortal, is curiously exemplified by the fact that Lady Brownlow, in her recently published *Reminiscences*, showed total unacquaintance with this frail dame's Indian antecedents and adventures, and spoke of her as 'Mrs. Grant, an American lady.'

Madame Grand (not Mrs. Grant) was not an American lady, but a native of the French East Indian settlement of Pondicherry. She came to Calcutta as wife of a Swiss gentleman, M. Grand, whose business transactions brought him to that city, where Francis was at that time fighting his long battle for power in India with Hastings. The lady, it seems, was only sixteen when married, very beautiful and very stupid. (Talleyrand in after years described her to Citizen Director Barras, in order to rescue her from imprisonment at Paris as a suspected spy—as 'the person in Europe the least capable and the

To make out completely the moral identification of Francis with Junius, it should be shown that the characters coincide in individual peculiarities as well as in general aims. It has been said that the boy is father to the man. Let us see how far the man Junius can be affiliated on the boy Francis.

We have before us in the first portion of the *Memoirs of Francis*, edited by Mr. Parkes, some specimens of epistolary intercourse of the elder Francis with his son Philip, during the school-days of the latter—some traits of precocious quickness of young Francis, as well as some notices of his unusually early self-devotion to that sort of study which might be turned to political or diplomatic use. His father was an Irish clergyman of the convivial type of the last century—as little of a genuine ecclesiastic indeed as a gentleman in priest's orders well could be, consistently with any decent degree of fitness to take such preferment as friends at court might give him. He was best known by his extra-professional works, as the translator of Horace, Demosthenes, and Æschines, author of the tragedies of 'Eugenia' and 'Constantine,' and of a variety of pamphlets written in the political interest of his patrons under the later governments of George II. and the earlier of George III. In 1740, the year of the birth of Sir Philip Francis, his father was settled in a Dublin curacy, and was engaged on the political press in the 'Castle' interest. When young Philip was about ten years of age his father opened a 'select academy for young gentlemen,' where his son received his first schooling for a year or two, and was then sent to St. Paul's School in London, which enjoyed the advantage at that time of having a good Greek and Latin scholar for second master, and also a traditional distinction

least disposed for meddling with any affair whatever.' . . . 'C'est une Indienne bien belle, bien paresseuse, la plus désoccupée de toutes les femmes que j'aie jamais rencontrées.') Francis was caught by M. Grand one night in his house; and on the domestic explosion which ensued, the lady threw herself on the protection of the man who had thus compromised her reputation. The Supreme Court at Calcutta—under the presidency, hostile to Francis, of Sir Elijah Impey—awarded M. Grand 50,000 *sicca* rupees damages, with costs, for Francis's nocturnal trespass on his premises and domestic peace. The lady left India—it is said, under other protection—before her seducer.

of teaching *legible handwriting*, an accomplishment which, whether Francis was Junius or no, stood him in good stead through a life unusually addicted to sedulous scribbling. It is curious to contrast the cast of character earnestly, and evidently sincerely, inculcated in the epistolary effusions of the father with that which the son must already have been forming in his school years, and which afterwards ripened into such crabbed fruit. 'Be it your lot, my dear boy,' writes Dr. Francis to young Philip, 'to be *amiable* rather than admired, envied, and hated.' At a later date (of young Francis's appointment to a clerkship at the War Office), 'My dear Phil,' writes his father, 'be generous, candid, humane, and above all, *good-natured*.' This extraordinary stress laid on good-nature might perhaps be accounted for somewhat in the same way as Lord Chesterfield's incessant inculcation of polite manners on his son. Each father did his best, and with about equal success, to strengthen the point of character which each knew to be the weak one.

Whoever Junius was, he was a man of classical education, and subsequent self-education in English and international law and history; of more than an outsider's familiarity with the forms of official and diplomatic business, with a certain tincture of Irish rhetoric in style, and some traits of early Irish training and associations—traits which occasioned Junius, for a time, to be rather currently identified with Edmund Burke, notwithstanding infinite moral and intellectual incongruities—notwithstanding also Burke's spontaneous and distinct disavowal. Now we have seen that Francis was educated the first years of his life in Ireland. In 1756, that is to say, at sixteen years of age, he was appointed to a junior clerkship in the Secretary of State's Office, through the interest of the first Lord Holland, his father's patron. In 1760 young Francis was appointed secretary to Lord Kinoul's special embassy to Lisbon, where he passed some months. After an interval devoted to a course of classical and constitutional reading, and after acting for a short time, as we have already stated, as occasional amanuensis to the first Pitt, he was appointed, in 1762, First Clerk in the War

Office, the Secretary at War being Mr. Welbore Ellis, who was succeeded in 1765 by Lord Barrington.

Mr. Hayward makes the remark that all the earlier pamphlets and newspaper letters (of the pre-Junian period) ascribed to Francis by Mr. Parkes, 'were in acrimonious opposition to the policy of his benefactors and friends.' He repeats the same remark with reference to the letters of Junius, considered as the work of Francis. 'He is represented as systematically writing against every friend, benefactor, and patron in succession, without a rational motive or an intelligible cause.'

We may observe in the first place, with reference to the writings of the pre-Junian period, that we think it very likely Mr. Parkes, in his enthusiasm of investigation, may have ascribed letters and pamphlets to Junius which were not his, and which it is no concern of ours to claim either for Junius or Francis. With reference to the acknowledged letters of Junius, there are at least two very eminent exceptions to this alleged general rule of acrimonious attack upon the friends, benefactors, and patrons of Francis. First, Lord Holland, whom his father long regarded as his patron, and to whom young Francis owed his first official appointment,—Junius pointedly waived very tempting opportunities of attack on that vulnerable statesman. Secondly, Mr. George Grenville, under whose Premiership Francis became First Clerk at the War Office, and to whose return to power in alliance with Lord Chatham we have seen that Francis and Junius both looked with ambitious hopes.

'Of all the political characters of the day,' says Mr. Taylor in his 'Junius Identified,' 'Mr. Grenville appears to have been our author's favourite. No man was more open to censure in many parts of his conduct, but he is never censured; while, on the contrary, he is extolled whenever an opportunity offers.'

We may add that no one can read the self-revelations published from the Francis papers by Messrs. Parkes and Merivale without acquiring the conviction that the political gratitude of Francis was of that Walpolean description, which required to be sustained by a lively presentiment of



future favours, and was liable to be converted into the most unmeasured resentment whenever his ambitious hopes were disappointed. Calcraft did much for him, but the provisions of Calcraft's will fell short of his expectations, and accordingly Calcraft's memory fares no better in the Autobiographical Fragment than in 'Junius.' He had an angry sense, too, which he was by no means mealy-mouthed in expressing, that his father had been left heinously unprovided for by his great friends. It is only fair to add that the father's early affection was requited in later years by the son, whose filial feelings stand on record among the few strong sympathies of his nature, as a set-off to his many strong and often unreasonable antipathies. After reading Francis's Memoirs, and the extensive and very curious additions to his previously published correspondence given to the world, in fac-simile from the original MSS., for the first time, in the monumental quarto raised to the memory of Francis and Junius by Messrs. Chabot and Twisleton, one feels to have become better acquainted, and we may perhaps add, more in charity with both. To learn to know a man, his antecedents, surroundings, and probable main moving springs of action is, in most cases, to learn to make pretty large allowances for what is erratic in his conduct and singular in his character.

Whoever Junius was, he was a man of unresting political activity and personal ambition, outrageous arrogance, prompt resentments, and enduring vindictiveness, coupled with habits rarely combined with such a character, of cautious reserve and concealment. Whoever he was, he assuredly had in the highest degree that *esprit désapprobateur* which Montesquieu congratulated himself on not having. On all these points, from all the attainable evidence, just such a man was Francis.

Lord Byron once said that the cause of his quarrel with his wife, or his wife's quarrel with him, was so simple that it never would be made out by anybody.

The reason why Junius so long remained unidentified with any known public personage is so simple that it should have been self-evident to everybody. It is, in short, that, as

the success of 'Junius' was a *succès de scandale*, so the authorship of 'Junius' could not but fix on any man less of fame than infamy. No man living could afford to be known to have wielded that assassin pen—no man, with a name otherwise decently reputed to leave behind him, would choose to leave it distinctly identified with the outrages of that arch-libeller. 'Why,' asks Mr. Hayward, 'did contemporary opinion altogether overlook, or dismiss as untenable, the coincidences on which so much stress has recently been laid as bringing the authorship home to Francis, so that his name was never so much as mentioned in connection with the authorship of "Junius" till 1812?' For the simple reason, because these coincidences were carefully kept out of view by Junius and his original publisher, the elder Woodfall, at the time of the first appearance of the famous Letters. It was not till the publication of the edition of 1812 by the younger Woodfall that it was discovered how much Junius had written under other signatures and to private persons—and that the clue was given which led Mr. Taylor, and so many good judges since, to the moral certitude that Junius could be no other than Francis.

When the first propounder of the 'Franciscan theory,' Mr. John Taylor, addressed himself to the study of 'Junius' in the then recently published Woodfall edition of 1812, he so addressed himself, as he tells us, 'simply with the design of profiting from the study of what has been long deemed an English classic.' Whatever indications Mr. Taylor found of authorship he found in the 'Private Letters' of Junius to his publisher and other personages of his day, and in the 'Miscellaneous Letters,' first added to the edition of 1812, as authentically proceeding from the pen of Junius.

The outrageous violence of the language in which Junius, under the alias of 'Veteran,' resented the 'expulsion' of so obscure a person as Francis then was (1772) from a subordinate position in a public office, and the virulence of sarcasm, in every possible form, with which the same Great Anonymous pursued the fortunate person (Mr. Chamier) who had stepped over Francis's head into the Deputy Secretaryship

of War, gave Mr. Taylor his first clue for the identification of Junius with Francis. How, indeed, could it be possible to suppose that Junius would go out of his way—studiously shunning detection *as Junius* in so doing—to raise such a storm in a puddle as he did under the alias of ‘Veteran’ on an occasion of so infinitesimally little public interest or importance as the removal or resignation, whether more or less voluntary, of a couple of clerks in the War Office? That, on so slight provocation—supposing him personally uninterested in the affair—he should lose all command of temper, all measure in language—should perform day after day, on such a theme, every possible fantastic variation, and indefatigably pour forth on the head of an obscure rival of obscure official subalterns all the vials of his wrath and all the vitriol of his sarcasm! Unless on the supposition of some motive intensely personal, it was indeed inconceivable that the Great Unknown should feel so strong an interest in the personal grievances—if grievances there were—of a pair of Little Unknowns in a public office, and show such savage resentment at the promotion over their heads of a third Little Unknown from outside that office! But the suspicion, once aroused, of the *personal* concern of Junius in the fortunes of Francis, gave Mr. Taylor the first suggestion of the Franciscan solution of the Junian mystery.

That clue had been missed by the editors of the Woodfall edition of 1812, and missed apparently because, with rather edifying simplicity, they took Junius at his word as to the character he thought fit to assume in the ‘Letters,’ of lofty personal independence, as well as mature age and experience. Whether that assumption had imposed equally on his original editor and publisher may perhaps be doubted. The elder Woodfall had sufficient motives for simulated unconsciousness of the real authorship of the ‘Letters’ to render it probable that he would readily simulate such unconsciousness. The letters of Junius were, for several years, a mine of wealth to him. Woodfall well knew—had been pointedly made to know—that to the continued working of that mine *secrecy* was an essential and indispensable condition. He offered,

and Junius prudently declined, a share in the profits of the first reprint of the Letters. As a tradesman, Woodfall must have been too good a judge to run the risk of killing, by indiscreet curiosity, the goose that laid the golden eggs. As an old friend, and St. Paul's schoolfellow (if he recognised Junius as such), he must have felt an honourable obligation to keep the secret as long as his author wished it kept—that is to say, longer than the elder Woodfall lived to reveal it. The identity of Junius with Francis may afford a natural explanation why Junius—in general as little disposed as Francis to the melting mood—should show so much of friendly feeling, beyond mere business relations, towards his publisher; and why Woodfall—having once emphatically been made to perceive that disclosure would to his correspondent be ruin—should have forborne from any attempt to verify whatever suspicions he may have entertained—or from communicating to his family anything he may have known, or guessed, as to the authorship of the 'Letters.'

Considering these circumstances, it cannot, we think, appear surprising that the 'Franciscan theory' of the authorship of 'Junius' did not take its origin from any tradition handed down in the Woodfall family. There will be found in the Appendix to the first volume of Francis's Memoirs an account by Mr. Parkes of a conversation held by him in 1857 with Miss Woodfall, the only surviving offspring (æet. 89) of Junius's publisher, H. S. Woodfall. That old lady said 'she had heard discussions before her father on the mystery of the Junius authorship, and the claims of divers public men discussed by him or by others in his company, but she feels confident that her father had no preponderating suspicion of the real author, though he may at different times have considered that circumstances and evidence pointed strongly or weakly to this public or literary man or the other.' It is obvious to remark that, if H. S. Woodfall was in firm though tacit league with Francis to keep the secret as to the authorship of the famous Letters, he would be no more likely to allow himself to betray his knowledge of that secret to his family than in any other third quarter. Miss Woodfall con-

cluded by expressing 'her opinion that the different members of her family never had any more knowledge of the mystery of the true authorship of Junius than the public.'

The double character, which we have sought to exhibit incarnated in a single person, had a redeeming element equally in its avowed and anonymous manifestations; the element, namely, of public spirit working, with whatever personal obliquities, towards public ends since realised.

'Freedom of the press,' says Mr. Merivale, 'and the personal freedom of the subject, owe probably more to the writings of Junius than to the eloquence of Chatham or Burke, the law of Camden and Dunning. It is not too much to say that, after the appearance of those writings, a new tone on these great subjects is found to prevail in our political literature. Doctrines which had previously met with almost general consent became exploded; truths which up to that time had been only timidly propounded were placed, in post-Junian times, on the order of the day.'

The same judicious editor observes on the eventual fruits of Francis's stormy and abruptly closed career in India, that—as 'Junius had laid, by bold generalisation, the foundation of modern doctrines of freedom of the person and the press, when very few were disposed to follow out his theories, except mere demagogues, who could not really understand, and merely abused them,' so 'Francis may be said, with equal truth, to have sketched the outlines of the system of Indian government which now prevails; although many years passed before his views were appreciated, and nearly a century before they were adopted.'

## V.

## VOLTAIRE.

1. *Voltaire et la Société au XVIII<sup>me</sup> Siècle.* Par Gustave Desnoiresterres. Vol. I. *La Jeunesse de Voltaire.* Vol. II. *Voltaire à Cirey.* Vol. III. *Voltaire à la Cour.* Vol. IV. *Voltaire et Frédéric.* Vol. V. *Voltaire aux Délices.* Paris, 1871-3.
2. *Voltaire.* Sechs Vorträge von David Friedrich Strauss. Leipzig, 1870.
3. *Voltaire in Frankfurt am Main, 1753.* Denkwürdigkeiten von K. A. Varnhagen von Ense. Achter Band. Leipzig, 1859.
4. *Jean Calas et sa Famille. Étude historique d'après les Documents originaux, suivie de Pièces justificatives et des Lettres de la Sœur A.-J. Fraisse de la Visitation.* Par Athanase Coquerel fils. Seconde Edition, refaite sur de nouveaux documents. Paris, 1869.
5. *Voltaire.* By John Morley. London, 1872.<sup>1</sup>

M. GUSTAVE DESNOIRESTERRES' five volumes,<sup>2</sup> the last of which brings Voltaire to the end of his personal *démêlés* with 'thrones and dominations,' and to the beginning of the period facetiously distinguished as that of his Ferney Patriarchate, are distinguished in a remarkable degree by minute research and exact citation of every accessible document that can throw fresh light on his subject. They are not less distinguished by the skilful *mise en scène* of the motley Voltairian drama which kept Europe amused or scandalised during its whole performance, and in which the author successively brings on the stage the minor actors in due relation and subordination to the chief performer. The recently published Voltaire readings to the Princess Louis of Hesse (alas!) and a select circle of hearers, by Dr. David Friedrich Strauss (the general tone of which provokes little recollection of the graver and more questionable antecedents

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, October 1873.

<sup>2</sup> Three more have been published since.

of the veteran controversialist), condense so much of the results of M. Desnoiresterres' previous labours as could be brought within 'one small volume; and supply, in addition, a complete and entertaining narrative of the twenty years of Voltaire's Ferney Patriarchate, and a critique of his philosophical and theological writings, which appears to us itself open to criticism. M. Athanase Coquerel *filz*, who has figured lately as M. Guizot's 'Liberal' antagonist in the debates of the Synod of the French Reformed Church, contributes very usefully, in his volume on 'Jean Calas et sa Famille,' to the authentic illustration of the most creditable and not least characteristic episode of Voltaire's later life—his persevering and successful efforts for the reversal of an atrocious sentence, and the rescue from ruin of the innocent family of an equally innocent and legally murdered parent. And, finally, Mr. John Morley, last, not least, brings up the rear of recent Voltaire literature. His *Apology for Voltaire* vividly exhibits the character, if it exaggerates the enduring effects, of his irregular onslaughts on the creed of Christendom.

Biographers have differed as to both the place and the precise time of Voltaire's birth, and he himself has assigned different dates to it at different periods. As if the spirit of scepticism had been destined to beset his life from the beginning, the first exercise of it has been made at the expense of his baptismal register, which bears date November 22, 1694, and certifies his birth as having taken place on the day previous. M. Desnoiresterres' researches have fixed his birthplace at Paris about the date given by the register; and there is no reason whatever for crediting by preference any of the various fancy dates scattered about in his correspondence. The older he made himself, the less he imagined would the authorities dare to persecute him. 'Don't say, I beg of you,' he writes to D'Argental, in January 1777 (the year before his death), 'that I am only eighty-two; it is a cruel calumny. Even were it true, *according to a cursed baptismal register*, that I was born in November 1694, it must still be granted me that I am in my eighty-third year.'

François Marie Arouet (we shall see in the sequel how

he came to assume the name of Voltaire) was almost condemned to death in the hour of birth, and it is said, was *ondoyé* (the term employed for informal sprinkling with water at home), lest there might be no time for the ecclesiastical rite. He was all his life, or always said he was, on the point of dying, and was resolved, all the while, to live as long as he could—and longer.

Voltaire owed much that afterwards peculiarly distinguished him to his Jesuit college training, notwithstanding the ridicule which he afterwards threw upon it in his 'Dialogue entre un Conseiller et un ex-Jésuite.' The rhetorical and poetical exercises through which he was put by the good Père Porée, not only in Latin, but in French also, and the dramatic performances, which made a conspicuous figure in all the Jesuit establishments, supplied the first aliment to his genius for poetry and the drama to which he owed so much of his contemporary celebrity throughout his career.

As Voltaire's father was a highly respectable notary, entrenched in his *morale bourgeoise*, though of eminent and extensive aristocratic business connections, it seems singular that he should have selected for friend of the family, and godfather of the infant François Marie, a certain Abbé de Châteauneuf, whose clerical reputation chiefly lay in the line of gallantry, and whose idea of carrying out the spiritual relation between himself and his godchild was first decisively illustrated by introducing young Arouet to the old Aspasia of French hetairism, Ninon de l'Enclos, who was then turned eighty. The lively lad found favour in the eyes of the lively old lady, who left him 2,000 francs in her will to buy books with. Godfather Châteauneuf introduced his youthful charge into worse company than Ninon's—exceedingly good company indeed in the sense of the day. While yet a pupil of the Jesuit college, he was taken into the so-called *Société du Temple*, where, during the last dreary years of hypocritical devotion of the Grand Monarque's reign, princes and dukes solaced themselves with gallant and poetical abbés for their compelled gravity at court by the most unrestrained derision of religion and morality altogether.



‘The little Society of the Temple,’ says M. Desnoiresterres, ‘presided over by the Abbé de Chaulieu, though chiefly composed of old men, was none the more chaste, sober, or orthodox on that account.’ To these voluptuaries the nearness of the tomb seemed only an additional reason for making haste to enjoy their last days of grace. It was the philosophy of Tom Moore’s Regent in the ‘Twopenny Post Bag :’

Brisk let us revel, while revel we may,  
For the gay bloom of fifty soon passes away ;  
And then people get fat,  
And infirm, and all that,  
And a wig, I confess it, so clumsily sits,  
That it frightens the little Loves out of their wits.

Vincennes and the Bastille had, in some flagrant instances, for a while avenged the sinking monarchy of the bacchanalian outrages of the princes, aged abbés, and adolescent acolytes of the Temple. But the death of Louis XIV. instantly freed from exile or durance vile the Chevalier (Grand Prieur) de Vendôme and the Abbé Servien, the two most audacious of that audacious brotherhood. Vendôme was sincerely and profoundly respected for his vigour in vice by the new Regent. ‘I have seen him,’ said Saint-Simon, who knew him well, ‘in perpetual admiration of the Grand Prior, who for forty years had every night gone to bed drunk, always publicly kept mistresses, and never ran dry of sallies of impiety and irreligion.’ Amongst these *débauchés à outrance*, says M. Desnoiresterres, ‘of whom Chaulieu was the patriarch, the prejudice of age no more existed than any other. Greybeards retained all the gaiety and vigour of adolescence; the lapse of years was ignored altogether; they glided by like river-water, leaving no trace behind. If they developed *embonpoint*, that only increased the resemblance to Anacreon and Silenus, the saints held most in honour of the Bacchic Olympus.’ Their ranks indeed were ever and anon thinned by death. Godfather Châteauneuf was carried off amongst others. But new guests instantly filled the place of the old; and the religion, or rather philosophy, of the place proscribed superfluous mourning for the departed.

Arouet the elder, says his son, gave him up for lost, because he kept good company and made verses. A set of men who became the *roués* of the Regency would scarcely be considered good company by a sober man of business, with whom decorum was part of his stock in trade. Old Arouet had two sons, and seems to have had little pleasure in either. He was himself a Jansenist, but in moderation. His elder son, Armand, became a gloomy fanatic, and participated with the party in the Church to which he belonged in all the enthusiastic extravagances which culminated in the miracles of muscular tension exhibited at the tomb of the Abbé Paris. These apparently preternatural feats, which have found mesmeric parallels in our days, caused the cloisters of St. Médard, the theatre of their performance, to be closed by royal ordinance—a police measure which provoked the well-known couplet placarded on the walls of the cemetery:—

*De par le Roi—défense à Dieu  
De faire miracle en ce lieu.*

Old Arouet used to say he had *two fools* for sons—one in prose, one in verse. But he made a mistake as to the capacity of the younger for carrying on the paternal craft of money-making. The time which he was compelled to spend in law studies, and at the desk of a *procureur*, was by no means lost to his future fortunes, whether in the pursuit of fame or wealth. During that hated apprenticeship he doubtless caught up some knowledge of law and business which stood him in good stead in after years. In his autobiographical ‘*Mémoires pour servir à la vie de M. de Voltaire*,’ he expressed himself as follows, with perfect frankness, as to his art of getting on in the world, for which he had been shrewd enough to see from the first that literature, in that age and country, offered but poor prospects.

I have been asked by the exercise of what art I have contrived to amass means to live like a *fermier-général*. I may as well explain this, that my example may serve others.

In France one must either be *anvil* or *hammer*. I was born *anvil*. A small patrimony becomes every day smaller, since everything in the long-run rises in price, and Government is ever and anon

tampering with the funds and the currency. One must keep an eye open to all the operations made in finance by a ministry always needy and always tottering. There is always sure to be one or other of these out of which an individual may make his profit without being beholden for it to anyone; and nothing is so sweet as to owe one's fortune solely to oneself. The first step costs some trouble, the rest is easy. One must practise economy in youth, and then one is surprised in old age to find what an amount one has by degrees accumulated. That is the time of life when fortune becomes most necessary, and that is the time at which I now find myself in enjoyment of it. After having lived with kings, I live *chez moi* like a king, notwithstanding immense losses.

It is a notable instance of Voltaire's good understanding (and good advice) in financial matters, that even in his 'hot youth,' and with all the acquisitive ardour which accompanied him from youth to age, he never was the dupe, as half the nation was, of Law's paper system and of the Mississippi scheme. We find him writing, in 1719, to a young friend, Genonville:—

It is time, my dear friend, to take refuge in the country when Plutus is turning all heads in the town. Have you really all run mad in Paris? I hear no talk but of millions. *Has half the nation found the philosopher's stone in the paper-mills?* Is Law a god, a rogue, or a quack, who poisons himself with the drugs he administers to all the world? It is a chaos I cannot fathom, and about which I imagine you understand no more than I do. For my part, I abandon myself to no chimeras but those of poetry.

On the suppression of Law's notes, Voltaire remarked, '*Paper is being reduced to its intrinsic value.*' It was the succinct funeral sermon of the system.

There was little in Voltaire's early *coups d'essai*, whether in life or literature (except levity), to indicate the predestined Prophet of the French. He did not enter in earnest (as much in earnest as was in his nature) on that prophetic function till after his Hegira—his three years' exile from France and residence in England—the England of Locke, Newton, and Bolingbroke, three not precisely homogeneous objects of his after-adoration. Love-making and verse-making, loose company and large expense, were

the sources of his first scrapes in life. The course of his true love never did run smooth, nor could, in the channels he dug for them. His watchful parent took umbrage at his late hours and lavish spendings, and, to get him out of Paris, made interest with the Marquis de Châteauneuf, surviving brother of his godfather Abbé, to take him in his suite as page to the Hague, where the marquis was French ambassador.

From the Hague, however, young Arouet was speedily sent back to Paris, on the representations made to his patron ambassador by another watchful parent—a certain Madame Dunoyer, a Protestant refugee, of literary and other notoriety, whose younger daughter and Voltaire fell violently in love with each other. They concocted plans between them for invoking the aid of the French ecclesiastical authorities to rescue the daughter from her heretical mother in Holland, and restore her to her father in France, a good Catholic, if otherwise rather good-for-nothing, as he seems to have been. This orthodox project naturally never got any further than the first conception: the lady missed the beatitudes of Voltairian Catholicism, but retained Voltaire's friendship, which he proved in later years.

In poetry as in love, Voltaire's first essays assumed a colour of orthodoxy. He competed for the prize offered for an ode on Louis XIV.'s restoration of the choir of Notre-Dame, in fulfilment of a pious vow of his father. The ode was unsuccessful, and the author was fain to confess that sacred subjects were not his forte. *En revanche*, the satirical pieces, rightly or wrongly imputed to him under the Regency, had the success of lodging him in the Bastille, where he spent some eleven months in a detention which had not much of penal in its character. Some time after his liberation he happened to meet at the table of M. Le Blanc, Minister of War, a certain Captain Beauregard, a Government spy, to whom he imputed his late imprisonment. 'I knew well,' young Arouet exclaimed with natural warmth, and with the indiscretion equally natural to him, 'that spies were employed, but not that they were paid by invitations

to ministers' tables.' The spy revenged himself in the dastardly manner which, as we shall presently see, some of his betters were not ashamed of imitating. He laid wait for Voltaire by night, at the bridge of Sèvres, cudgelled him soundly, and even left a mark on his face. Voltaire got a warrant from the Mayor of Sèvres for the arrest of Beauregard, but the latter in the meantime had joined his regiment. The aggrieved party thereupon had recourse to criminal proceedings, with the fiery persistency with which he always pursued the grievances whether of himself or others. All the satisfaction he got, the year after, was the placing of Beauregard under arrest for a time.

A quarrel more conspicuous, in proportion to the rank of the aggressor, was that which was picked, a year or two later, with the young poet, who had, in the meantime, assumed the name of Voltaire,<sup>1</sup> by the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot, scion of a noble stock, and field-marshal to boot, albeit he never had seen a battle-field. This high-born and high-ranked gentleman met Voltaire one evening at the opera, and, offended apparently at something said, or not said, by the latter, accosted him scornfully, 'M. de Voltaire—M. Arouet—or how do you call yourself?' Voltaire made a quiet answer, and the matter passed off for the moment. A night or two after they met again at the theatre, in the presence of the actress Lecouvreur; and Rohan, to show his spirit perhaps before the latter, repeated his impertinent question of the former evening. This time Voltaire's spirit was also up, and he replied, 'It was true, indeed, he did not drag after him the appendage of a great ancestral name, but he knew how to do honour to the name he did bear.' The

<sup>1</sup> The young Arouet was said to have derived his new surname from a small estate he was supposed to have inherited from his mother, only no one has ever been able to discover where that estate was situated. A more probable suggestion is, that his new name may have been formed from an anagram of the letters which composed his old one—*Arouet l. j.* (*le jeune*)—the *u* being converted into *v*, and the *j* into *i*. In like manner, an old college tutor of his, Père Thoulié, transformed himself, by a similar anagrammatic process into the Abbé Olivet—omitting only the unnecessary *h* from his original name. This method of reforming a plebeian name into one more distinguished-looking seems not to have been uncommon in those times.

Chevalier raised his stick; Voltaire laid his hand on his sword; mademoiselle fainted; and so ended the second act of this absurd drama. The third opened with what we can only call a rascally ambushade. Voltaire was dining, as he often did, at the Duke de Sully's. A servant whispered him that some one was waiting to speak to him at the house door. He found there a hackney coach, with two men, who requested him to get on the step, and then laid hold of his clothes, and belaboured him with sticks over the shoulders while the Chevalier de Rohan, from another carriage, encouraged 'his workmen' to their work, but enjoined them not to hit their victim on the head. The beaten man ran back into the house, and called on the Duke de Sully to go with him to a commissaire, and have a *procès-verbal* made of the outrage. The Duke refused, and in so refusing, Dr. Strauss rightly observes, showed as inadequate a sense of his own honour as that of his guest, since the former was not less outraged by this cowardly *guet-apens* than the latter. But the Rohans were a noble family, of powerful and extended connections, and the poet was only a bourgeois by birth, after all. The Prince de Conti, though he had written romantic verses on Voltaire's first tragedy, lately performed, remarked that the cudgelling bestowed on him had been wrongly given but rightly received. The Bishop of Blois said, 'It would be a bad look-out if poets had no shoulders.' Condorcet, in his 'Life of Voltaire,' contents himself with the dry remark, 'The Duke de Sully deigned to manifest no resentment—persuaded, doubtless, that the descendants of the Franks retain the right of life and death over those of the Gauls.'

Voltaire set strenuously to work to take fencing lessons. The Rohan family were uneasy—the police on the *qui vive*. It was thought best that a poet who would not take a beating kindly should reoccupy his old apartments in the Bastille. Here, as before, he was treated with all indulgence imaginable, dined at the governor's table, and received visits *ad libitum* from the court and city. There was no desire to keep him in the Bastille, nor, indeed, in the

country. Voltaire offered to take a run across the Channel, and the offer was gladly accepted. From the land of *lettres de cachet* and arbitrary arrests he longed to fly to the land of law and liberty. So the order was issued, on the 2nd of May 1726, for his liberation. But the authorities, inspired by the Rohans, would have the assurance that he should really leave France. Accordingly, his gaoler bore him company to the port of embarkation, Calais. Such was Voltaire's Hegira, which became the turning-point of his whole after-action on his age. The princes and prelates who drove him forth, or let him go, foresaw not the remoter consequences. His leaving France was their work; the mind he brought back was indirectly their work also. Voltaire afterwards took vengeance poetically, if not heroically, on the pride and pusillanimity of his noble friend Sully, by striking the character of his great ancestor out of the 'Henriade,' in the first draught of which poem the austere figure of Rosny was presented in contrast with the heroic type of the Béarnais. In the poem as published, he substituted for Rosny (Sully) the lesser personage of Duplessis-Mornai.

Dr. Strauss observes that what first made a man of Voltaire was his three years' residence in England. In the next breath he adds, that all through his life he never quite matured to manhood. 'Even in old age he surprises us not only by outbursts of passion, but by fantastic escapades which we should scarcely excuse in youth. Seriousness of mood, calmness or dignity of demeanour, remained ever strange to him.' Condorcet, in his 'Vie de Voltaire,' observes :—

The happy qualities of Voltaire were often obscured and distorted by a natural mobility which was aggravated by the habit of writing tragedies. He passed in a moment from anger to sympathetic emotion, from indignation to pleasantry. His passions, naturally violent, sometimes transported him too far; and his excessive mobility deprived him of the advantages ordinarily attached to passionate tempers—firmness in conduct—courage which no terrors can withhold from action, and which no dangers anticipated beforehand can shake by their actual presence. Voltaire has often been seen to expose himself rashly to the storm—seldom to meet it with fortitude. These alternations of audacity and weakness have often afflicted his friends, and prepared unworthy triumphs for his envenomed enemies.

Soon after his return to France, Voltaire prepared for publication his 'Letters on England,' the substance of which has been since reprinted in his works, principally in his 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' under other titles. His object was, to make his countrymen better acquainted with the philosophy, literature, sects, and politics of England. His thoughts on these subjects had been partly thrown upon paper during his stay in this country; and after his return he had endeavoured to adapt them to the meridian of France, by circumspect softenings of expression on many points on which, in England, plain speaking would have been permitted. He felt his way with Cardinal Fleury, who had lately become Prime Minister, by reading him some carefully pruned passages of his Letters about the English Quakers, much, it is said, to the amusement of his aged Eminence. But when the book appeared in print, the authorities took up arms against it, the copies were seized by the Government, and the publisher thrown into the Bastille, as the author would have been also, if he had not had timely warning from his friend D'Argental, and taken refuge in Lorraine, and afterwards on the Rhine, while his book was torn to pieces and burned in Paris by the public executioner, as offensive to religion, good morals, and respect for authority.

There was certainly no contesting the last count of this indictment. In these *Lettres anglaises* not an authority in France escaped some note of disrespect. 'The English nation,' says Voltaire, 'is the only one who has succeeded in restricting the power of kings by resisting it.' Take that, royalty by right divine! In another place he says, 'You don't hear in England of *haute, moyenne et basse justice*, nor of the right of hunting over the lands of a citizen who has not the liberty of firing a gun in his own fields.' Take that, privileged *petite et grande noblesse*! Elsewhere—'That indefinite being, who is neither ecclesiastic nor secular, in a word the *Abbé*, is a species unknown in England. Anglican ecclesiastics are all decorous, and almost all pedants. When they are told that in France young men, known only by their talents for debauchery, and elevated to prelatie rank by



female intrigue, pursue their amours publicly, give or accept exquisite and late suppers nightly, and then betake themselves to imploring enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, and boldly call themselves successors of the Apostles, they thank God they are Protestants. But of course they are vile heretics all the same—*à brûler à tous les diables*, as Master Francis Rabelais says, and therefore I give myself no concern with their affairs.’

Voltaire’s scientific imports from England were scarcely less obnoxious. To seek to substitute Newton’s newly discovered law of attraction for the *Vortices* of Descartes was at that time an outrage for police repression, and to venture to recommend inoculation for the small-pox was at once to fly in the face of the Faculty and the Sorbonne. In these unlucky *Lettres anglaises*, in short, there was something to offend everyone; and Voltaire had apparently good reason to apprehend treatment of unusual rigour if he had obeyed the summons to give himself up into custody, as he took good care not to do. ‘I have a mortal aversion to prison,’ he wrote to D’Argental. ‘I am ill; a confined air would have killed me, and I should probably have been thrust into a dungeon.’

The strange story of Voltaire’s fifteen or sixteen years’ *liaison* with the Marquise Du Châtelet—the ‘divine Émilie’—need not be told again.<sup>1</sup> It was an union of Poetry and Science, however illicit, singularly constant for that age. The lady’s studies and talents lay in the direction of mathematics and physics, on which she published several works. She had begun a translation of Virgil in her youth, and read Tasso and Milton in the originals. She had musical and mimical talents to boot, but sometimes excited Voltaire’s impatience by showing more interest in a discovery of Newton than in a verse of Virgil—or Voltaire. With all this, she by no means played the learned lady in the great world, but followed all the courtly and fashionable frivolities of that day with not less ardour than her scientific studies in the country. Voltaire gave her the title of *Venus-Newton*.

<sup>1</sup> See *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxvi. p. 74.

Voltaire had flattered himself, in prose and verse, for awhile into favour with the Pompadour, though Louis XV. persistently turned the cold shoulder on the courtier-philosopher. Voltairian philosophy and ethics, however, exactly suited the polite circles of the eighteenth century in France. His writings showed a sharp and clear sense on all subjects which lay not too deep for his ken or theirs, and an accommodating morality worthy of a pupil in the schools of the Jesuits, summarised in the closing line of his 'Gertrude'—*Il n'est jamais de mal en bonne compagnie.* The semi-persecution he was always dodging, and seldom suffering, only served to attract attention and to add piquancy to his Protean forms of attack on whatever was orthodox, venerable, or established, and served also to absolve from serious responsibility his bush warfare (often under false names) with '*les grands anthropokaies*,' and '*les petits anthropokaies*,' who had ceased to burn, and could only tease their assailants—an art in which they met their match in Voltaire. At the same time he was intimate with many of the higher clergy, and coaxed Pope Benedict XIV. to endorse his orthodox testimonials of fitness to fill a chair among the sacrosanct 'Forty' in the Academy. He represented an age in which Life had ceased to be regarded in any of its serious aspects by those classes who figured in its front ranks, engrossed its privileges, and discharged none of its duties. Voltaire's moral doctrines did not fall lower than the average practice of his age: posterity's quarrel with him is that they did not rise higher.

Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man !

In Voltaire's eyes man was a very poor thing, and that he should seek to erect himself above himself was, with him, sheer tartuffianism or charlatanism. *There* was the vice of his system, if system he could be said to have had. In his scheme of life no presentiment ever showed itself of our 'pleasant vices' making themselves 'whips to scourge us.' The whimsical soliloquy, from his own pen, of a man falling swiftly and softly from the top of a steeple might

typify the whole period of the Voltairian ascendancy in the eighteenth century—‘*Bon, pourvu que cela dure.*’ But *cela ne pouvait durer*. In the last quarter of that century came the eclipse, at least partial, of Voltaire by Rousseau, of aristocratic iconoclastic pastime by democratic iconoclastic passion. After the apologist of all the levities of his age, their Avenger appeared, and farce closed in tragedy.

The peculiarity of Voltaire’s position towards powers and dignities all through his life was that, while he was persecuted by authority, he was petted by high society lay and clerical; his genius and writings were always in fashion, though always contraband. His precociously cultivated social tact and talents had much to do with securing for him this privileged personal position. ‘Voltaire was too vain himself,’ says M. Desnoiresterres, ‘not to have great consideration for the vanity of others, and he had too much tact not to discern what might wound it, however imperceptibly.’ Accordingly his only personal enemies were amongst second-rate men of letters, to whom his superiority was, of course, odious. The high *noblesse*, many eminent persons among the dignified clergy, and his leading literary and philosophic compeers were his constant allies.

With one exception—Rousseau. That exception may be considered as having been mainly owing to the radical opposition in the genius and temper of the two men. It is to be noted that in all his many quarrels with authors, Voltaire was rarely, if ever, the first aggressor. Once offended, his wrath was unmeasured, his vengeance always unscrupulous, and, too often, implacable. There was no imputation, however infamous, or however monstrous, that this great exemplar of the *genus irritabile* ever hesitated to fling at the head of any critic of his whom he considered formidable, and whose reputation was not altogether above aspersion. All the atrocities ever put on record in the annals of crime or in the tomes of casuistry printed for the practitioners of the Romish confessional, were not too many to ascribe to those guilty of the one unpardonable crime—that of having found fault with anything whatever produced by Voltaire. Models of sarcasm,

which he closely imitated, were furnished by our English satirists, such as Pope's 'Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis' and Swift's 'Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge, the Almanack-maker.' The Abbé Desfontainés, the Marquis Lefranc de Pompignan, and 'Maître Aliboron' Freron suffered, as it were, at second hand from the light artillery which had first been brought against Grub Street, and the sorry heroes of the 'Dunciad.' When Voltaire's vigour beyond the law was challenged, in sending Freron to the galleys by a stroke of the pen, he treated with all Swift's cynical indifference the question whether Freron had ever been really sent, or whether he was not merely predestined to be sent there some day or other. Slightly inconsistent with the unbounded licence which Voltaire allowed his pen against all assailants, was the habit he had of employing his influence with his friends in the Government for the arrest of the persons, or the suppression of the journals, of his foes in the press. The first offence, however, comparatively rarely came from his side. He had too much of poetical power and fancy, and was besides far too much a man of the world, to need, or to be in any degree disposed for, personal controversy merely as a source of supply of piquant subjects for writing. On the other hand, Rousseau's *nature de polémiste*, as M. Desnoiresterres terms it, continually prompted him to find or make antagonists against whom to air his paradoxes. Rousseau's genius was declamatory and controversial. Voltaire never declaimed, and never answered declamation, unless indirectly, in the shape of satire in prose or verse. His reply to Rousseau's rebuke for his pessimist poem on the earthquake of Lisbon was the publication of 'Candide, ou l'Optimisme;' and Rousseau's revenge was to say slightly that he had not read it. It was a fight of hawk and fish in different elements. 'Rousseau,' says M. Desnoiresterres, 'was a polemist, for whose extraordinary talent of impassioned rhetoric combat might almost be said to be a condition of existence. Voltaire, on the other hand, could not descend into the controversial arena without interrupting his daily habits of composition, correspondence, and

country amusements.' To have a quarrel with him, Rousseau was accordingly compelled to pick one. But as it was not till the period of the second exile of his redoubtable rival, and his choice of a residence or residences in Switzerland, or on the Swiss frontier, that Rousseau opened his war of the pen with Voltaire—at first with caution and courtesy,—we shall defer our notice of the first cause or pretext of hostilities till we arrive at that period.

It may seem inconsistent with the exquisite social tact of Voltaire, that he was always getting into scrapes which seemed ascribable to sheer want of tact—of knowledge of the nature of men and things; and may be said to have lived in an element of hot water of his own boiling. '*Il y a des gens,*' wrote his friend, the President Henault, to Madame du Deffand in 1742, '*que les aventures vont chercher, et qui rencontreraient des hasards à la Trappe.*' The contradiction may be solved by that insatiable and irrepressible activity which was the leading trait of his character, and which the *vis inertiae* of Louis XV.'s administrations, beginning with Fleury, constantly and vexatiously impeded in every field of its attempted exercise. Voltaire's impatience of these impediments was intensified tenfold by his three years' enjoyment of an opposite *régime* in England, and never did absolute monarchy make a greater mistake than when it sent such a spirit to such a school. Inaction was impossible to him; he must be bestirring himself in something, for or against somebody, every hour of his life. Conceive such a spirit struggling under such a system as was personified in Fleury, whose whole wisdom might be summed up in the maxim *quieta non movere*, and whose prime precept, like that of Talleyrand to his subordinates, would be '*Surtout, point de zèle.*' It is 'as good as a play' to read the correspondence between Voltaire and Fleury—the former pushing eagerly for diplomatic employment in secret negotiation with his royal friend Frederick; the latter veiling under unctuous phrases of clerical-courtly evasiveness his want of initiative and capacity for vigorous decision or action. Frederick, on his part, in the interviews in which Voltaire endeavoured to

sound his policy, knew, as well as a great Prussian minister has known since, how to cloak under the frankest communicativeness and unreserve of speech the depth of designs which he would have none penetrate till in course of execution. While Voltaire was essaying his amateur diplomacy against Frederick's kingcraft, the royal author of the 'Anti-Machiavel,' on the other hand, was practising the most Machiavelic artifices to make Paris and Versailles too hot for Voltaire, and compel him to transfer the literary glory of his presence to Berlin and Potsdam. 'Frederick,' says M. Desnoiresterres, 'was capable of proceeding to any extremity to get Voltaire to Berlin; and the surest way of doing so was to render it impossible for him to stay in France. His father, in time of profound peace, had been in the habit of kidnapping the flower of the population of Christian states to recruit his grenadiers. Frederick was a different man, no doubt, from Frederick William. He was his father's own son, however, on more than one point; and in whatever he might differ, it was not in failing to inherit a certain ferocity of race, which he knew how to dissemble, but which betrayed on occasion shrewd signs of existence.' While Voltaire was employing himself for the French Government in an unavowed diplomatic mission at Berlin, Frederick was working underground to cut off his retreat into France. The king wrote to his ambassador-extraordinary at Paris, Count Rothenburg, 'I send you an extract from a letter of Voltaire, which I beg you to find some indirect channel, without committing either yourself or me, to put into the hands of the Bishop of Mirepoix' (then an influential person at Court, and who was ridiculed without mercy in this letter of Voltaire to Frederick). 'I want to make an irreconcilable quarrel for him in France; it is the only way to make sure of having him at Berlin.'

It is amusingly illustrative of Voltaire's shrewdness, not to say sharpness, in money matters, that he got himself paid twice over for making his first journey to Berlin. First, by Frederick, whose invitation he had accepted on condition of payment of his travelling expenses, a condition which the king, who looked as sharply into money matters as Voltaire

himself, grumbled at extremely, writing to his confidant Jordan, 'His six days' apparition will cost me five hundred and fifty crowns a day. It is paying high for a Court fool; no great lord's buffoon ever had such wages.' Secondly, Voltaire got paid by his own Government for his trip to Berlin, in the shape of a lucrative share in Government war-contracts, which he solicited, under the name of a relative, and obtained on the strength of his secret mission. 'All this,' says M. Desnoiresterres, 'would not have loaded Voltaire's memory very heavily (as he simply turned to the best advantage the friendships he had made in high quarters, and the capital he had accumulated by previous successful operations), if he had not stigmatised with extraordinary severity, in a letter to President De Brosses, about this time, the monstrous fortunes to the building up of which all the plagues which afflict nations contributed. "How long," he asked, "will the people suffer themselves to be ruined to pay for defeats in Germany and enrich Marquet and Company?"

"Et Paris, et fratres, et qui rapuere sub illis."

Considering that the brothers Paris had let in Voltaire for a good thing in their contracts, there was something passing strange, not to say impudent, in '*rapuere sub illis*,' from his pen.

After losing the 'divine Émilie,' Voltaire had soon to experience, in male as in female friendship, what Louis XIV. in his old age gracefully expressed to one of his beaten generals, 'Ah, Monsieur le Maréchal, on n'est plus heureux à notre âge!' The excessive *empressement* and occasional obtrusiveness of his courtiership had thrown him more out of favour than ever with Louis XV., and the death of Madame Du Châtelet having severed the closest of his private ties to his country, Frederick became more pressing than ever with his invitations to him to take up his permanent residence at Berlin. With his usual worldly shrewdness, Voltaire, before he would agree to make the journey, again stipulated for the *advance* of his travelling expenses, as he said he had no cash in hand for that purpose. The king took

the hint, and, as he himself expressed it in verse, poured the requisite golden shower into the lap of his Danae. He sent him, moreover, with a profusion of verbal blandishments, the key of royal chamberlain, the cross of the Order of Merit, and the grant of a yearly income of twenty thousand livres, with house, table, and equipage free. The warmth of welcome entirely corresponded with that of invitation. But presently *surgit amari aliquid*. 'What could be more natural,' Frederick had written, 'than that two philosophers, indissolubly linked by likeness of tastes and sentiments—*formed to live together*—should give themselves that satisfaction?' In this rose-coloured programme two things were forgotten. First, that one of the two philosophers, 'formed to live together,' was a wit; secondly, that the other of the two was a sovereign.

The story of Voltaire's quarrel with Frederick, of which the former retained the recollection all his life with his usual vehemence of vindictiveness, has been told humoristically by Carlyle in his 'History' of that monarch, and with matter-of-fact precision by M. Desnoiresterres, and afterwards by Dr. Strauss. Frederick's favourite hobby had been to engage round him at Berlin a French literary 'happy family,' if such a family could have foregone its instincts and forgotten its teeth and claws! No such association could hold Voltaire to his good behaviour; he was as 'impossible' in a coterie not of his own selection or his own *épuration* as the late Lord Brougham in a Cabinet where he could not be king and premier rolled into one. Submission to authority, whether lay or clerical, was an impossible thing to Voltaire. His wit was an indomitable and irrepressible will-of-the-wisp, which would dance and flicker over whatever miasmata fed its flame; and there were such to feed it under the sabre sway of Potsdam as under the alternate priest and petticoat sway of Versailles. On the other hand, Frederick was resolved to be master in his own house and in his own Academy; and, of the two wills, that of 'the master of thirty legions' of course proved the stronger. Voltaire offended Frederick by overwhelming with merciless ridicule the head



of his Academy, Maupertuis—formerly his (Voltaire's) friend and Newtonian oracle, and that of the divine Émilie—in the inimitable '*Diatribes du Docteur Akakia*,' and in supplementary farewell Parthian shots after leaving Berlin. He had further offended the king (and, we may add, discredited himself) by one of his habitual financing operations,—this time of a more than ordinarily shady complexion. We may refer our English readers to Carlyle's '*History*,' and readers of French and German to M. Desnoiresterres' and Dr. Strauss's volumes, for the details of Voltaire's illicit transactions in Saxon bonds, under cover of purchases of jewellery from the Berlin Jew Hirschel. Neither Israelite nor philosopher came well out of them. It so happened that Lessing, then a young man of two-and-twenty, was at Berlin, in needy circumstances, glad to find penwork of any kind. He was employed by Voltaire to translate into German his correspondence in the legal proceedings against Hirschel. Lessing was indiscreet enough to keep and communicate to others a proof-sheet, which had fallen into his hands, of Voltaire's '*Louis XIV.*' then printing at Berlin, and the first sight of which was, of course, reserved for royal eyes. His indiscretion got wind, and Voltaire expressed his displeasure, well-founded as it was, in terms so insulting to Lessing as made that German Voltaire his lifelong enemy. The first fruit of that enmity was an epigram by Lessing on Voltaire's contest with Hirschel, the concluding lines of which may be freely translated as follows:—<sup>1</sup>

To cut it short, and make it clear to view  
Wherefore the Jew  
No better *versus* Herr Voltaire succeeded—  
We can but say,  
'Tis plain as day,  
Voltaire much better played the Jew than *he* did.

<sup>1</sup> We here subjoin the original lines of Lessing:—

'Und kurz und gut, den Grund zu fassen,  
Warum die List  
Dem Juden nicht gelungen ist,  
So fällt die Antwort ungefähr—  
Herr Voltaire war ein grösser Schelm als er.'

The indignities of Voltaire's arrest at Frankfort, on his route from Berlin to Plombières, to which place he had made health his pretext for taking flight from the intolerable constraint of intercourse with his royal fellow-philosopher, were, for a century or so, known to the world only through the narrative of Voltaire himself, and that of his confidential secretary, Collini, in which it is needless to say that Frederick and his stupidly blundering (as intensely servile) local satellites, came off second-best in the eyes of the whole European reading public. No contradiction to that narrative issued from the Prussian Chancery; and it was not till the late Varnhagen von Ense obtained access to the royal archives, in which the official documents about that affair had long lain buried, that its exact circumstances were made public. More than a hundred pages of Varnhagen's posthumously published '*Denkwürdigkeiten*' are devoted to a detailed account of it; and from that account it appears—as everyone acquainted with Voltaire's free and easy way of dealing with facts in which he was personally concerned would have expected—that he had caricatured and exaggerated the language and conduct of Frederick's resident at Frankfort, Freytag, and his coadjutors, on every point which could enhance the odium of their proceedings. But we are not sure that Varnhagen's official details do not make them more odious still. The less truth there was in Voltaire's description of Frederick's Frankfort functionaries as mere ignorant and brutal ruffians, the more deliberate and systematic appears their non-recognition of all law, municipal or international, by which their '*allerdurchlauchtigster grossmächtigster König, allergnädigster König und Herr*' could be frustrated of his will, or balked of his vengeance. All Frederick wanted, except to show his ill-humour, was to get back from Voltaire, before he left Germany, his key of chamberlain, his cross and ribbon of the Order of Merit, and his copy of a privately-printed volume of the royal rhymester's (so-called) poetry, some of which, being of a scandalous complexion towards other powers, Voltaire might make mischief with. The king's orders were brief, rough, and

peremptory, but, unluckily, vague also in the wording ; and his local functionaries thought it safer to exceed than fall short of the rigour with which it was apparently intended they should be enforced. Accordingly, from the end of May to the beginning of July, Voltaire was detained in Frankfort, even after he had surrendered without demur the key and cross, and '*livre de poéshe du roi mon maître,*' as he thought fit to travesty Freytag's demand for that special treasure. Frederick's absence from Berlin at some of his military musters created delay in getting his orders on each fresh incident of this absurd transaction ; and Voltaire's impatience leading him to attempt to escape from Frankfort, Freytag regarded as a strong presumption that he must either have perpetrated, or else must meditate, the perpetration of something altogether *enorm*, or he would, of course, have remained quietly under royal arrest until his *allergnädigster König und Herr* vouchsafed to send him marching orders.

Frederick soon forgave Voltaire for having been ill-used by him ; but Voltaire never forgave Frederick. His vanity, indeed, found its account in renewed correspondence with the once idolised monarch ; but his rancorous and vindictive feeling smouldered in his breast to the day of his death. In the autobiographical fragment left behind him by Voltaire, his desire to blacken Frederick on the most exposed points of personal character is indulged without measure or modesty ; but it is impossible to suppose all false in the picture of mingled philosophy and ribaldry he has left on record of the royal suppers at Potsdam. Whatever Frederick's nature may have been originally—however his heart may have been 'formed for softness, warped to wrong'—his whole moral frame had received a violent wrench in youth, and never recovered from its effects. Frederick, indeed, gave that 'terrible man,' his father, credit for having made him all he afterwards became as a king and conqueror ; but his father may be said, probably with equal truth, to have unmade him as a loving and loveable man. His sentiments towards mankind, as a '*verdamte Race,*' deserving and

doomed to wretchedness—a sentence which, as a belligerent autocrat, he certainly did his part to execute—might well have originated in his own terrorised and tyrannised boyhood.\* Whatever its source, the heart's core of Frederick's married-unmarried life was bitterness. Voltaire's more cheerful cynicism may have given him, or rather promised him, some refreshment; but between two such spirits it was not in the nature of things that there should be permanently safe or satisfactory intercourse. They should have remained contented with a commerce of flattery from a distance; and Voltaire could have rendered Frederick quite as well from a distance the only real service he was capable of rendering him—that of correcting his verses.

To kings most or least Christian, Voltaire owed only one final obligation—that, when his skittish tricks had exhausted their not too-enduring royal patience, they kept him determinedly at a safe distance. On this one point of policy at least Frederick II. and Louis XV. were fully agreed. Voltaire tried to make use of his continued intimacy with Frederick's beloved sister, Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bayreuth, to procure for him a renewed invitation to Berlin, not probably with the intention of accepting it, but of making a merit at the Court of France of declining it. To Paris and Versailles, the theatres of his triumphs as a dramatist, if not as a courtier, his real wishes always pointed. Thither also pointed those of his widowed niece, Madame Denis, who contrived, some twenty odd years afterwards, to entice her aged relative to Paris to die there. At the earlier epoch now before us, of his return from Germany, he received intimations from his friends at Court that the great objection to him in that pure moral sphere was the religious one. The matter in hand, then, was to make some conspicuous demonstration of orthodoxy; and to Voltaire's way of thinking, says Dr. Strauss, there was never any difficulty about that. At Easter, 1754, he communicated in the church at Colmar with all signs of devotion, which, however, did him no good at Versailles or Paris. Most unluckily for the convert (of Reynard the<sup>e</sup> Fox's fur), copies of the 'Pucelle,'

yet unpublished, had found their way to Paris, in which not only saintly personages were satirised, but, what was worse, unsaintly ones—the King and the Pompadour. Voltaire resorted to his customary disclaimers of the authorship of the obnoxious passages, and sent expurgated copies of the poem to the ministers and the mistress. The device was too stale. He next attempted to enlist on his side his old friend the Duke de Richelieu, now governor of Languedoc; but in an interview with the Duke at Lyons got cold comfort from him as to his hopes at Court. Then he paid his devoirs, in grand gala-dress, to another old friend of the epoch of the '*aimable Régence*,' the Cardinal Archbishop de Tencin. But the cardinal bowed him out of his archiepiscopal palace at Lyons in a minute or two, saying he could receive no one at his table who stood so ill at Court. Voltaire hobbled back to his carriage (afflicted with gout as well as with vain hopes and aims), and, after some moments of moody silence, said to his secretary, Collini, 'My friend, there is no footing for us in this country.' He contrived, however, to keep one foot in France and one in Switzerland, for nearly another quarter of a century, by purchases of estates on both sides the frontier. 'A philosopher,' he said, 'with the hounds at his heels, must have more than one hole to run to.' His turn for financing had yielded to an earth-hunger for landed property. Accordingly he purchased estates and houses in French, Genevese, and Bernese territory, and thus had the choice of three distinct governments in case of necessity to seek a city of refuge. Ultimately, however, he settled down on his French property, to which he made considerable additions, and from which he derived the title he was latterly known by—that of the Patriarch of Ferney.

The quarrel of Voltaire with Rousseau, or rather of Rousseau with Voltaire, began about this time, when the latter first came to reside among the compatriots of the '*Citizen of Geneva*,' who found or took occasion for his first declaration of war with the reigning Parisian philosophy and its recognised chief, from the appearance of D'Alembert's article *Genève*, in the '*Encyclopédie*.' That article had been

partly written to promote the success of Voltaire's project of setting up a theatre at Geneva, a project which had combined against it the entire forces of ecclesiastical and political conservatism in the city of Calvin. There was something rather amusing than edifying in the austere attitude of Rousseau on this occasion—himself an enthusiastic votary of the theatre, and a dramatic author—standing forth all of a sudden to proclaim, in the pulpit style of Geneva, that the drama universally, however moralised, was pernicious, and that no calamity could befall his country to be compared for a moment with that of imbibing a fatal taste for theatricals. Voltaire, on receiving the first intelligence of Rousseau's letter, and before he had read it, exclaimed, 'They say he has pushed sacrilege to the pitch of blaspheming the drama, which is becoming the third sacrament of Genevan Protestantism. In this country of Calvin everyone is going mad for the theatre. Three new pieces have been acted within three months at Geneva, and of those three pieces one only is mine.'<sup>1</sup> Eight years afterwards, when Rousseau thought fit to include Voltaire in the imaginary machinations against his fame and peace with which he charged David Hume (!), Voltaire again wrote to D'Alembert, 'Imaginez-vous que Jean-Jacques m'accuse aussi d'être de ses ennemis, moi qui n'ai d'autre reproche à me faire que d'avoir trop bien parlé et trop bien pensé de lui. Je l'ai toujours cru un peu charlatan, mais je ne le croyais pas un méchant homme. Je suis bien tenté de lui faire un défi public d'administrer les preuves qu'il a contre moi; ce défi l'embarrasserait beaucoup, mais en vaut-il la peine?'

The question of theatre or no theatre at Geneva was not first raised by Voltaire. Wherever there were Frenchmen in the last—(may we not add in the present?)—century, there must needs be theatres; and, in the France of Voltaire's day, the politics of the green-room were the only politics left besides those of the boudoir. Seventeen or eighteen years before Voltaire's sojourn in Switzerland, the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert*, September 2, 1758.

ambassadors of France, Sardinia, and the Swiss cantons had held conferences at Geneva for the purpose of restoring concord in that little commonwealth much vexed with factions. These assembled diplomatists, in the intervals of business, missed their accustomed amusements, and besought the 'Magnifiques Seigneurs' of the governing Council to provide a theatre for them at Geneva. Much against the grain, the Council did permit the erection of a temporary wooden edifice of that description; but the Ecclesiastical Consistory only waived their opposition on condition that the licence should be limited to one year. That term expired, the Venerable Consistory summoned the Magnificent Council to keep its promise; and the reason they gave for thinking the drama a less suitable recreation at Geneva than anywhere else, was the 'prodigious taste' for it, to which they held it therefore of vital importance to administer no further aliment.<sup>1</sup> Well, the theatre was closed, and *théâtres de famille* innumerable were opened. The Magnificent Council and the Venerable Consistory went on waging an unequal conflict with the 'prodigious taste' of considerable numbers of their fellow-citizens, when Voltaire suddenly swooped down amongst them, and the conflict from doubtful seemed to have become desperate.

The civil and ecclesiastical authorities maintained, indeed, their *veto* against the erection of a public theatre at Geneva; but the Magnificent Council and Venerable Consistory were sorely beset with remonstrances against the manifest iniquity of a police which had two weights and two measures for persons of quality on the one hand, and the plebeian theatre-going public on the other. While the citizens of Geneva were rigorously refused indulgence of their 'prodigious taste' for theatricals, it was alleged too truly that M. de Voltaire enticed 'persons of both sexes' to his château, to 'commit the indecency' of seeing and acting in plays just outside the Genevan frontier. But what remedy? The *crème de la crème* of the society, not of the cantons only, but of the adjacent French provinces, flocked

<sup>1</sup> *Représentation du Consistoire au Magnifique Conseil du 20 et 27 Avril, 1738.*

to 'assist' actively or passively in the same indecency of setting at nought the united wisdom of the Magnificent Council and the Venerable Consistory of Geneva. The Seigneur of Ferney always gave them good words in reply to their pompous representations, and always good suppers to those who came to see his plays. There matters rested, 'to the great indignation,' says M. Desnoiresterres, 'of austere people, and also of artisans and common people, who denounced with justice the too evident inequality in the practical application of the law to different classes.'

In Gibbon's 'Memoirs of My Life and Writings,' the following description is given of the impression made on him by the earlier dramatic performances started (and shared in) by Voltaire before his final establishment, which, of course, included a theatre *en permanence*, at Ferney:—

The highest gratification which I derived from Voltaire's residence at Lausanne was the uncommon circumstance of hearing a great poet declaim his own productions on the stage. He had formed a company of gentlemen and ladies, some of whom were not destitute of talents. A decent theatre was framed at Monrepos, a country house at the end of a suburb; dresses and scenes were provided at the expense of the actors; and the author directed the rehearsal with the zeal and attention of paternal love. In two successive winters his tragedies of 'Zaire,' 'Alzire,' 'Zulime,' and his sentimental comedy of the 'Enfant Prodigue,' were played at the theatre of Monrepos. Voltaire represented the characters best adapted to his years—Lusignan, Alvarez, Benassar, Euphemon. His declamation was fashioned to the pomp and cadence of the old stage; and he expressed the enthusiasm of poetry rather than the feelings of nature. My ardour, which soon became conspicuous, seldom failed of procuring me a ticket. The habits of pleasure fortified my taste for the French theatre, and that taste has perhaps abated my idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakspeare, which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of an Englishman. The wit and philosophy of Voltaire, his table and theatre, refined in a visible degree the manners of Lausanne; and, however addicted to study, I enjoyed my share of the amusements of society. After the representations at Monrepos I sometimes supped with the actors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Edward Gibbon, Esq., with Selections from his Correspondence*, &c., by Milman, p. 108.



It is curious to contrast the moderate estimate formed by Gibbon of Voltaire's makeshift theatre and amateur actors with the fine frenzy of the elderly poet and performer of elderly parts himself, all whose geese were swans; even that fat little goose, Madame Denis, the *Zaire* of the *troupe*, whom Voltaire did not hesitate to compare to Clairon, and even wrote something to that effect to Clairon herself, then the recognised Queen of Tragedy at Paris. The latter, who (talent apart) was only five or six-and-thirty, could not feel much flattered by the comparison with a jolly old soul (*grosse réjouie*) of fifty years of age; and Voltaire, whose dramatic prestige at the capital was, in good measure, in Clairon's keeping, had to disclaim the impiety of having meant to compare anyone with *her*. Madame d'Epinay, who paid Voltaire a visit about this time, has left, in a letter to Grimm, a speaking portrait of Madame Denis, which we cannot resist extracting:—

Voltaire's niece is enough to make one die of laughing. She is a fat little woman as round as a ball, of about fifty—*femme comme on ne l'est point*—ugly, good-humoured, an enormous liar, without ill-intention or ill-nature—without talent, while seeming talented—for ever screaming at the top of her voice, laying down the law, talking politics, tagging verses, *raisonnant, déraisonnant*. All this without too much pretension, and without giving any offence to anyone. Through all this peeps out a little pervading tinge of partiality for the male sex. She adores her uncle, *en tant qu'oncle, et en tant qu'homme*. Voltaire loves her, laughs at her, and holds her in reverence.

This lively letter-writer represented all Paris in the eyes of Voltaire, who paid her the most assiduous and admiring attentions, and kept her amused and flattered, though she pretends impatience:—

One can find no time for anything in the house with Voltaire, she writes to her *bon ami*, Grimm. 'I have passed the day alone with him and his niece, and he is fairly tired telling me tales. When I asked permission to write four lines to you, that you might not be uneasy about my health, which is excellent, he begged to stay in the room to see what my black eyes were saying while I wrote. He seats himself opposite me, gets up to poke the fire, laughs, and says he knows I am turning him into ridicule, and that I look as if I were

writing a critique of him. I reply that I am writing all he is saying, as it is at least as much worth writing as anything I am thinking.

This period was beyond comparison the most productive of ~~Voltaire's~~ Voltaire's literary existence, if we consider the extended scope and influence as well as the mere number of his writings. Voltaire's dramatic works, which held the highest estimation in his own mind and day, have long lost that pre-eminence; and his other histrionic career of courtiership, at Versailles and Berlin, had, as we have seen, been anything but successful. In both spheres the satirist had been too much for the courtier; but his latter rôle having finally been abandoned in the period now before us, satire on State and Church flowed from his pen, throughout its whole duration, without impediment and without respect of persons. 'For forty years,' he wrote to D'Alembert from Ferney, in 1761, 'I have endured the outrages of bigots and blackguards [*polissons*]. I have found there was nothing to gain by moderation, *et que c'est une duperie*. I must wage war openly and die nobly—

Sur un tas de bigots immolés à mes pieds.'

From henceforth his writings assumed a character more distinctly polemical against everything that excited his displeasure in Church or State; and as, in all his writings, he aimed especially at immediate effect, and his natural and acquired gifts were better fitted for the light cavalry movements of wit and satire than for the heavy artillery engagements of erudite controversy, his literary activity at this period took in great part the shape of fugitive and occasional pieces. 'He set flying,' says Strauss, 'from the Swiss and Dutch presses a regular wasp-swarm of such writings all over France and Europe.' Almost every month produced some novelty of this description, and each in succession went forth under the names of different authors—men who were dead, or men who had never lived. His maxim was to hit the mark, but not show the hand of the marksman. 'I am a warm friend of truth,' he wrote to D'Alembert, 'but no friend at all to martyrdom.' A friend of truth, with limited

liability. We believe, however, Dr. Strauss is right in saying it would be misunderstanding Voltaire to ascribe his disguises solely to regard for his personal safety. Quite irrespectively of any danger from revealing himself, this playing at hide-and-seek with the French and European public was a never-failing source of amusement to one of his tricky temper.

The optimist Theodicee of Leibnitz and Pope, to which he had shown some earlier leaning, became a pet subject of Voltaire's satirical vein, as indulged especially in his poem on the 'Earthquake of Lisbon,' and afterwards in his 'Candide.' In earlier years he had shown himself quite as ready to do battle against pessimist views of life and nature, when these assumed a religious shape, in Pascal's 'Pensées,' as afterwards against the systematically opposite view of 'the best possible world,' which he made to cut such an absurd figure in the Pangloss of 'Candide.' His final consolatory conclusion seems to have been that, if everything is not exactly good, everything is at least passable; and he puts in the mouth of the angel Ithuriel, with obvious reference to Paris, the indulgent sentence, '*Il n'y a pas de quoi brûler Persepolis.*' Here we may remark parenthetically that every successive horde of Parisian political levellers has declared and demonstrated an opposite determination to Voltaire's Ithuriel. Each in succession has uniformly uttered the threat that he would possess the fair Lutetia, or make a holocaust of her. The last and most desperate horde of anarchists in our own day went nearer carrying that threat into execution than any of their precursors.

What, however, most justly rendered illustrious Voltaire's so-called Patriarchate of Ferney, besides his liberal patronage and encouragement of local industries, was his persevering and ultimately successful efforts to repair, so far as the tardy intervention of public justice could repair, the atrocious iniquities perpetrated by the second Parliament of the kingdom, that of Toulouse, on the impulse of popular fanaticism, against the innocent Calas and Sirven families. His equally energetic, and still more protracted, efforts were not crowned

with success, to obtain the reversal of the scarcely less outrageous sentences of the Parliament of Abbeville against La Barre and D'Etallonde, the former of which was actually carried into execution. The last-named of the two youths capitally sentenced for offences which, *if proved* (and it does not seem that they were proved), amounted to nothing more heinous than some sword-cuts or cane-cuts inflicted on a wooden image, the singing of some ribald rhymes of Piron, and the omission of obeisance to a Capuchin procession—saved himself by flight, and received, at Voltaire's request, a commission in the Prussian service.

In devoting a volume to the revindication of the memory of Jean Calas, more than a century after his memory had been already vindicated by the highest judicial authorities of France, M. Athanase Coquerel has discharged a pious office, not only to the posthumous good repute of an innocent man, iniquitously condemned and executed, but to the historical good repute of an entire religious communion, which it is shameful should have been otherwise than superfluous in this latter half of the nineteenth century. He has, however, discharged it thoroughly. If Count Joseph de Maistre, of papacy-defending memory, were now sitting down to write his '*Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*,' he would scarcely have the more than Ultramontane assurance to indite the following sentences of his first '*entretien*':—

Rien de moins prouvé, Messieurs, je vous l'assure, que l'innocence de Calas. Il y a mille raisons d'en douter, et même en croire le contraire.

It might, indeed, have been enough to reply to the revivers of such groundless calumnies, that a royal Commission composed of the highest judicial and administrative functionaries in France reversed *unanimously* the sentence which had been pronounced and executed against Jean Calas, exactly three years before, by the Parliament of Toulouse. It may, nay it must, be admitted that there had been nothing very exceptionally atrocious in the procedure of that body in the case of Calas. Atrocitý was the rule of the old judiciary

administration, not the exception. On the impulse of Voltaire's disinterested and determined agitation of that case, as afterwards of the not less crying cases of Sirven, La Barre, and D'Etallonde, France was awakened to the sense that, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the lives and properties of every subject of the realm lay at the mercy of tribunals whose modes of procedure, rules of evidence, and employment of torture had been formed on the model of the Holy Inquisition of the fourteenth century. The procedure of the Parliament of Toulouse in the case of Sirven, shortly subsequent to that of Calas, showed that it was sensible of no deviation from precedent in the first of these cases; and that of the Parliament of Abbeville, in those of La Barre and D'Etallonde, furnished Voltaire new subjects of impassioned and just invective, and of active intervention through every channel open to his personal influence.

The case of Jean Calas has been so often set before general readers, especially readers of Voltaire, that a brief notice may suffice in this place of the most salient and shocking points of it as brought out in bold relief by M. Coquerel.

Jean Calas was a Protestant tradesman in Toulouse, that most Catholic city. He had been established in trade forty years there, and had won the respect and confidence not of his fellow-Protestants only, but also of his respectable Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, with whom he had always lived in perfectly amicable relations of business and intercourse. One of his younger sons had gone over to the dominant Church, having been aided and abetted in that transition by a Roman Catholic female servant in his father's house. It is characteristic of the tolerant religious temper of the family that, notwithstanding the injury, as they must have considered it, thus done them, this woman, Jeanne Viguier, continued undisturbed in their service, and steadfastly attached to the unfortunate family all the rest of her life. The eldest son, Marc-Antoine, was ambitious to enter the profession of the law; but, having passed the examinations requisite for admission to the title of advocate, had been refused the certificate of Catholicity further requisite for that admission, which

was commonly granted without inquiry, as a matter of form. The same obstacle stopped him at the threshold of other professions, and, greatly to his disgust, he found himself thrust back behind his father's counter. The young man became idle and irregular in his habits; at home, sombre and taciturn. According to his mother's evidence, he was fond of repeating whatever he could find in Plutarch, Montaigne, or Gresset (Werther and René had not yet loomed lurid on those days) in the nature of apology for, or glorification of, suicide. The day of his death he had almost wholly spent in the billiard-room and tennis-court, and had given no account of a sum of money entrusted to him to exchange silver for gold. That evening Marc-Antoine supped as usual, about seven o'clock, with the family, and, as usual, sat moody and silent, and he quitted the table early. The rest of the party, including a young man of the name of Lavaysse, who was in Toulouse for a day or two, and casually invited to supper, stayed together in the upper room, where they had supped, till about a quarter to ten, when Lavaysse took leave; and a younger son, Pierre, went down to show him out. When these two got downstairs with a light, they instantly gave the alarm to those above of a catastrophe that had happened. A surgeon was called in, and the younger son, Pierre, ran wildly about the neighbourhood, as he said, '*demandeur conseil partout.*'

Now *what* had happened on Jean Calas' ground-floor? By the subsequent testimony of Pierre Calas and Lavaysse, they had found Marc Antoine hanging to a log of wood (such as was used to wind bales of calico round) placed on the top of the two leaves of an open door which divided the front and back shops. The first thing done was, of course, to take him down and attempt resuscitation. The next thing that suggested itself unfortunately to Calas, the father, was to beg the rest to say nothing of the situation in which the body had been found, in order to spare it the public ignominies inflicted on suicides. In the meantime, the alarm given by Pierre Calas had brought a mob round the house. The dissimulation attempted by the father as to the cause of death

created a mystery which the mob instantly solved after mob-fashion by improvising a Catholic legend of a Protestant religious murder. This monstrous supposition, echoed by every tongue, was at once, with blind precipitation, assumed as fact by the magistrate, David de Beaudrigue, who first showed himself on the spot. That over-zealous functionary, without the slightest pains to take an exact survey of the place and circumstances—especially two most significant circumstances—that the upper garments of the unfortunate youth were found set aside, neatly folded, and that the body and the rest of the apparel bore no marks of a struggle—hurried off to prison the whole family party found in the house, including the Catholic servant-maid and the chance guest, who had come back there voluntarily after having left it, and had found some difficulty in readmittance. Truly two most likely accomplices, by their conduct and antecedents, in the presumed Protestant crime !

The legend started at once in full panoply from the popular brain. Marc-Antoine, it was fabled, had shown signs of approaching conversion to the Catholic faith. The Protestant body, it was further fabled, made it a point of principle to assassinate all seceders from their Huguenot heresy. That body had held a sort of *Vehmgericht*, no one could say where, to pass the sentence of death, *de rigueur* in all such cases, on Marc-Antoine. The young Lavaysse had acted as a delegate from that body to help the parents of Calas to carry the sentence of their coreligionists into effect. But the Catholic servant-maid, who had promoted one conversion in the family already, with perfect impunity as well to herself as to the convert—was she, too, a party to this Protestant capital punishment of the eldest son of the family for the (invented) intention of following the example of his younger brother? She must! But how could she? A mystery of iniquity, none the less easily credited because passing comprehension.

The moment the family party found themselves charged with a crime, the imputation of which, with their well-known antecedents, they could scarcely have conceived as possible,

they abandoned all attempt to save the memory of the suicide, and each separately stated the facts of the case as above narrated.

BUT M. David de Beaudrigue, a *titular* Capitoul of Toulouse (*i.e.* one who, as Voltaire expressed it, had bought for money the right, as a Councillor of Parliament, to administer injustice), was resolved that about this Protestant murder of an intending Catholic convert there was, and could, and should be no mistake. The crime was self-evident from the moment it suggested itself to an orthodox mob. But something that should look like corroborative evidence still appeared wanting, or something that could be extorted as direct evidence from the prime culprit by torture. Accordingly, on the one hand, a fulminating *monitoire* was issued, by the Archbishop of Toulouse, quite in the style of the fourteenth century, to be read from all pulpits for a series of weeks, enjoining, on pain of excommunication, on all persons who should have learned, *by hearsay or otherwise*, anything whatever on the several heads of accusation enumerated in that precious document (in which were assumed, not only the guilt of the Calas family and their alleged accomplices, but the maxims of murder calumniously ascribed to the whole Protestant body)—to make their depositions before the proper authority. Evidence *in favour* of the accused was neither invited nor accepted when tendered. Thus were collected, to do duty for evidence, all the idle hearsays afloat in Toulouse, utterly unsupported, utterly unsifted, though the facts lay open to any impartial scrutiny. But, as all did not suffice to bring home guilt to parties perfectly innocent, the unexceptionable method, sanctioned by many a time-honoured precedent, remained, to extract the truth by torture, ordinary and extraordinary, from Jean Calas himself. Accordingly, this man, who, for more than sixty years, had led a life on which no reproach ever rested, this father of a family, whose family rule had been one of tolerance and indulgence, was put to tortures the blood runs cold to read, for the sole purpose (his own doom had been already pronounced) of involving in that doom his equally innocent



wife, son, servant, and guest. If Calas had flinched from the extremest torments flesh could endure, and retain life and speech; if his undaunted soul had for one moment been betrayed by his aged and enfeebled frame, his torture and death would have been shared by all the survivors of that fatal supper party. But the fortitude of innocence sustained Jean Calas to the bitter end; and the honest priest, who stood at his side during his last two hours of agony on the wheel, thought it his duty to go round to the members of the mediæval judiciary, who had condemned him, to attest that the innocent man had, to the last, asseverated his innocence, and that of all involved along with him in the same monstrous accusation. This saved the family: even the Capitouls of Toulouse durst not repeat the procedure which had failed of the effect mainly intended in the case of Jean Calas. The popular sympathies were by this time changing sides. Mr. Morley is in error in stating that 'the widow and the children of Calas were put to the torture,' and also in stating that they eventually fled to Geneva to take refuge with Voltaire. One of them alone did so.

That such a sentence as that of Calas should have been passed and executed in the kingdom of France at the date of the opening of the reign of our George III.—a prodigy of bigotry, any Protestant parallel to which, in England, must be sought as far back as the reigns of our Charles and James II.—was disgrace enough to the inquisitorial judicial procedure under the old *régime*—a procedure, by the way, which has left its *mauvaise queue* behind it in France to our own times. But some worthy descendants of the Toulouse Councillors of Parliament in 1762, and some worthy representatives of that inveterate intolerance of religious dissidence which, in the South of France, has smouldered on from generation to generation, under *cineri doloso* from that day to this—have, in quite late years, thought fit to take on their own shoulders even a worse disgrace than that of their great-great-grandfathers, as regards the case of Calas. After all, their ancestors acted on popular impulse, as ours did in the Popish Plot trials. But to seek to reassert

in these days the justice of the preposterous procedure which convicted Calas, in the teeth of the solemn and deliberate reversal of the results of that procedure, is much as if the ultra-Protestant champions of our own day should set about rehabilitating the judges and juries who did legal murders on the evidence of Oates and Bedloe. The only explanation of the obstinate tenacity of life of such strong delusions in the minds of men who, by courtesy, may be termed educated, is, that the cause of innocence, in the persons of the Calas family, owed its triumph to Voltaire, and there are minds so constituted that they will not serve God if the devil bids them. The Abbé Salvan, one of the recent apologists of the judicial murderers of Jean Calas, expresses himself as follows in reply to the first edition of M. Coquerel's work: 'That philosopher [Voltaire] has done *a great deal of harm* to Calas. Many people have believed the guilt of the Toulouse Protestant *solely* because Voltaire took up the defence of his memory, and went so far as to pay the costs of the final proceedings.' Truly that was going further than ecclesiastical charity would have gone in Voltaire's day. But 'that philosopher' would as willingly have advanced the cost of Calas' defence *before* he had been racked and broken on the wheel as after. Had Voltaire been in time to arrest the execution of an iniquitous judgment, instead of merely obtaining a tardy reparation for those who survived it, would the reverend Abbé have ventured to affirm that 'that philosopher' had 'done a great deal of harm' to Jean Calas, by preserving his home from being broken up, his property confiscated, his body racked in the gaol, and his limbs fractured on the scaffold? That was what Voltaire would have done doubtless, or endeavoured to do, had he had earlier notice of the proceedings against Calas, while they were yet pending. What the Abbé Salvan's ecclesiastical predecessors at Toulouse did was to foment to their utmost the popular zealotry which, from the first moment, prejudged the case. Even after the reversal of the judgment of the Parliament by royal authority, the Archbishop of Toulouse, to requite the religious zeal of *Messieurs du Parlyment*, and to administer spiritual

consolation for their secular snubbing, granted each and all of them the singular privilege of having mass celebrated in their houses on Sundays.<sup>1</sup>

It was, as we have said, during the twenty years of Voltaire's Ferney patriarchate that his pen took the widest range over the whole field of philosophy and theology, after his own discursive fashion. In his writings and correspondence of those years the Abbé Barruel and Professor Robison found their strongest 'Proofs of a Conspiracy' against all Thrones and Altars. Voltaire and his encyclopedic Paris correspondents at any rate *conspired aloud*. There never was much mystery about the mark aimed at, though, as we have said, there might be some effort to conceal the marksman's hand. What, then, was the mark aimed at? What was the occult sense of that mystic formula, '*Ecrasez l'infâme*,' which customarily closed Voltaire's letters of that period to D'Alembert, and his former patron, and still philosophic brother, Frederick of Prussia? Dr. Strauss has the following observations on this much-vexed question:—

No lesser name than that of Jesus Christ has been said to be intended by the 'infâme'; no lesser offence than blasphemy has therefore been charged on its use. But what sufficiently shows that such cannot have been the intention of the Voltairian use of that name is, that the word 'infâme,' in most instances in which it is used, is not masculine but feminine. This appears from those passages in which the phrase is carried out into length, and in which this strange personified attribute is represented by a feminine pronoun. Thus Voltaire writes to D'Alembert: '*Adieu, mon dur philosophe, si vous pouvez écraser l'infâme, écrasez-la, et aimez-moi.*' Frederick

<sup>1</sup> It would seem, however, that not even the privilege of Sunday masses à domicile could 'minister to the mind diseased' of David de Beaudrigue. That busy municipal, who must be held the prime mover of the murder of Jean Calas, had thought fit, without any official obligation, to be present at his execution—not, says M. Coquerel candidly, to feast his eyes with the torture and death of his victim, but from the ardent desire to convince himself that he had not made a cruel mistake, and to catch at a last dying confession from that victim, were it but by a word or look. 'David n'était pas un monstre; c'était un fanatique plein de précipitation et d'emportement. Il avait besoin de croire que les Calas étaient coupables, et à mesure que le dernier moment approchait, il renfermait avec effort au-dedans de lui les premières angoisses du doute épouvantable qui finit par le rendre fou.'

writes to Voltaire : '*J'approuve fort la méthode de donner des nasardes à l'infâme en la comblant de politesses.*' Well, but who then is this feminine '*Infâme*,' to whom Voltaire and his friends have vowed destruction? Upon this point, also, his correspondence leaves us in no doubt. 'I would wish,' writes Voltaire to D'Alembert, 'that you crushed the *Infâme*—that is the essential point. *Vous pensez bien que je ne parle que de la superstition ; car, pour la religion, je l'aime et la respecte comme vous.*' Again, D'Alembert to Voltaire : '*Cet infâme fanatisme, que vous voudriez voir écrasé, et qui fait le refrain de toutes vos lettres,*' &c. The '*Infâme*,' then, is Superstition—fanaticism. These, however, are abstract notions. What is their intended application to actual facts? When Voltaire writes to D'Alembert that he wishes to see the '*Infâme*' reduced in France to the same condition in which she finds herself in England, and when Frederick writes to Voltaire that philosophers flourished amongst the Greeks and Romans, because their religion had no dogmas—'*mais les dogmes de notre infâme gâtent tout*'—it is clear we must understand by the '*Infâme*,' whose destruction was the watchword of the Voltairian circle, the Christian Church, without distinction of communions, Catholic or Protestant.

In other passages of Voltaire's correspondence with D'Alembert he distinctly declares his conviction that the philosophers 'will certainly not destroy the Christian religion ; but Christianity, on the other hand, will not suppress the philosophers. Their numbers will continually go on increasing, from them will young men, destined to important public stations, seek enlightenment. Their increasing influence will render religion less savage, society more soft. They will prevent priesthoods from sapping religion and morality. They will render fanatics hateful, superstitionists ridiculous.'

No regimen could have been conceived more certain to convert expansive into explosive forces than that which was maintained throughout the eighteenth century in France, down to the actual outbreak of the great Revolution of 1789. There was just enough of authoritative restraint to give zest to resistance, just enough of feeble attempt at persecution to excite public curiosity and interest about the obnoxious opinions. There was just enough of vexatious censorship of

literary productions, and occasional confiscation of literary property, to exasperate without effectually disabling the class which had most influence over the public mind. But what we are chiefly led to take notice of by our present subject is the effect produced by this regimen on the *mode* of discussing the most serious questions. All that authority really succeeded in doing was in forming the controversial style of Voltaire. Such a style of controversy could admit of no apology in a free country. In proportion as discussion on the highest subjects is free, flippancy is indefensible. But, as Shaftesbury has observed :—

If men are forbid to speak their minds seriously upon certain subjects, they will do so ironically. And thus raillery is brought more in fashion, and runs into an extreme. 'Tis the persecuting spirit has raised the bantering one ; and want of liberty may account for want of true politeness, and for the corruption or wrong use of pleasantry and humour.<sup>1</sup>

Voltaire's sharpest stabs at the creed of his Church are usually followed by the most edifying exhortations to sacrifice reason on the altar of faith, and the most vehement disclaimers of all concurrence in the audacious heresies which he repudiates, while promulgating them. The disguise is transparent ; but even a pretext for assuming it would have been wanting, if authority had not ever and anon had recourse to the secular arm, to seizures and burnings of books and imprisonment of authors.

'In our own times,' says Mr. Morley, 'the profession of letters is placed with other polite avocations, and those who follow it for the most part accept the traditional social ideas of the time, just as clergymen, lawyers, and physicians accept them. The modern man of letters corresponds to the ancient sophist, whose office it was to confirm, adorn, and propagate the current prejudice. To be a man of letters in France in the middle of the eighteenth century was to be the official enemy of the current prejudices and their sophistical defenders in the Church and the parliaments. Parents heard of a son's design to go to Paris to write books, or to mix with those who wrote books, with the same dismay with which a respectable Athenian heard of a son following Socrates, or a respectable modern hears of one declaring himself a Positivist.

<sup>1</sup> *Characteristics*, i. 71.

Where Mr. Morley got his notion that the literary men or the professional men of our times are remarkably prone implicitly to accept traditional doctrines, we cannot pretend to conjecture. It is indeed true that neither men of letters nor men of science, for the most part, show themselves prepared to exchange old dogmatisms for new. A 'respectable modern,' would probably hear of his son 'declaring himself a Positivist' with the sort of amusement with which older men are in the habit of hearing other 'positive' declarations, made by younger ones, who have not yet sown their philosophical wild oats. There is an old story of Robert Owen's father-in-law, Dale the Quaker, saying to him, after hearing his confident programme of a complete new social system: 'Thee should be very right, Robert, for thee's very positive.' Minds which have not yet reached (and minds that never reach) maturity readily grasp at whatever offers itself in the shape of plausible projects of entire intellectual and social revolution. So much study is saved by them! 'Positivism' shelves so summarily all theology, and all metaphysics, as lumber of bygone ages—and even in physical science narrows so authoritatively the field of requisite study! Indolence and conceit (the besetting failings of youth, and which stick for life to those who have not stamina to reach mental manhood) find their account in welcoming a world-philosophy which, while it tabooes, *ex cathedra*, from all future 'scientific' inquiry the highest subjects of study which have hitherto exercised the highest minds amongst men, cuts down those subjects which it dogmatically admits within the domain of 'positivism' to just so much of misunderstood science as came within the imperfect vision of the most purblind of pseudo-philosophic mystagogues.

But enough of Comte and Positivism—topics which indeed have as little to do with Voltaire as muddled brains can have to do with clear ones. In turning over the 'dreary and verbose pages,' as Professor Huxley truly terms them, of the 'Philosophie Positive,' pages at every second or third of which the word *spontané* or *spontanément* recurs regularly with no

precise meaning, one is sorely tempted to exclaim—O for one hour of Voltaire! O for a stroke or two from the satiric pen of Doctor Akakia!

To a lady who once complimented Voltaire on his exquisite phrases, he replied, ‘Madam, I never made a phrase in my life.’ Neither did he. He talked with the pen to all readers on all subjects, and his winged words flew over all Europe as light as thistledown, depositing, like thistledown, abundant seeds for prickly growth. Sixty odd years and seventy volumes were filled with his conversations with all Europe—with all in Europe capable of the charm of literary conversation. That conversation was, indeed, conducted under difficulties; but these gave zest to the appetite with which the forbidden fruit of his writings was produced and plucked, despite the official frown and impotent interdict of authority. ‘*Je tiens infiniment à ce qu’on me lise*’ was his own frank avowal, and the difficulties often thrown in the way of bringing himself before the public doubtless kept him the more alive to the requisites for catching and fixing public interest. If his sense and taste made Voltaire averse to phrase-making, he was not less averse to *punning*—a sort of wit, he said, cultivated by those who have no other. His own wit, however, was sometimes exercised in plays upon words, as when an English visitor, Sherlock, dined with him once at Ferney, and asked him ‘comment il avait trouvé la chère Anglaise?’ ‘*Très-fraîche et très-blanche*,’ replied the Patriarch.

The twenty odd years of Voltaire’s life spent on the borders of Switzerland were, as we have said, the most productive, and certainly the least perturbed, part of it. But his own impatience (still more that of his housekeeping niece, widow Denis) of lifelong exile from Paris lured him back at last to be whirled to death in the metropolitan Maelstrom. Louis XV. had for once shown enough of the royal virtue of decision to keep Voltaire at a distance from his court and capital. Louis XVI. seldom had will enough of his own to be capable of frustrating the will of others. Widow Denis (who, as she proved within a year after the death of her uncle, had no wish so strong as to find opportunity for

indulgence of the long-cherished impulse *convolare in secundas nuptias*) had able and not over-scrupulous accomplices at Ferney in her feminine plot to coax the old patriarch back to Paris. A *protégée* of hers was married to a fashionable and philosophic Marquis de Villette, and the pair were domiciled at that time with Voltaire at Ferney. They contrived amongst them to get epistolary reports from Paris that Court and city were alike prepared to do homage to the old poet-philosopher. He had just completed a new tragedy, 'Irene,' the last child of his dramaturgic old age; and his familiar fiends tempted him with suggestions that it could not be put well on the stage without his personal presence in Paris to school the actors. The ruling passion, strong on the verge of death, prevailed. His judicious physician, Tronchin, predicted—a prediction too soon verified—that so old a tree could be transplanted so late only to perish.

Voltaire, when asked at the barriers of Paris, if there was anything contraband in his carriage, replied, 'Only myself!' Poems, addresses, and deputations came thick upon him, and he had something lively and pleasant to say to all who came. The Hôtel de Villette, where he had taken up his temporary abode, was crowded all day with visitors. Other crowds followed him whenever he showed himself in the streets. The popular voice hailed the old patriarch especially as the defender of Calas; and his old coach, as well as his old-world costume, everywhere drew the public gaze. He went about in a red coat lined with ermine, a black wig unpowdered, a red cap also trimmed with fur, not the last cap of that colour destined, at no long interval of time, to be seen in Paris. He had come from Ferney in his old coach, which was painted sky-blue studded with gold stars, and was dubbed by the wits of Paris 'the chariot of the empyrean.' Another car of Voltairian triumph, under another régime, was destined to be dragged through Paris some few years later. It was said of him epigrammatically, in the days when Revolution was sanguine, and before it had yet become sanguinary on a grand scale, '*Il n'a pas vu tout ce qu'il a fait, mais il a fait tout ce que nous voyons.*'



Not foreseeing Revolution, Voltaire soon saw he had no friends at Court—none, at least, who could help him to regain his footing there of some thirty years before. The Count d'Artois, indeed, afterwards the Most Christian King Charles X., but who was then as liberal as youth and vice could make him, would have been well disposed to give courtly and cordial welcome to all that was worst in Voltaire. Queen Marie Antoinette would have liked, it was said, to have gone to his play, with the longing, says Strauss, of a crowned daughter of Eve after forbidden fruit, or with a not less natural curiosity to set eyes on the old Tree of Knowledge himself. But here for once Louis XVI. interposed his royal and marital veto, and Versailles left Paris to apotheosise unassisted the old Proteus of literature on the old-accustomed scene of the successes most prized by him—the stage. Voltaire was present in his box, the observed of all observers, while his bust was being worshipped in rhyme and crowned with laurels, and the house rang with the reiterated plaudits of the Parisian public. ‘You are stifling me with roses,’ he exclaimed. All that glorious noise was indeed his death-knell. Not only were his nerves strained beyond his strength with excitement, he had filled his hands with work. He had undertaken to aid the Academy in their Dictionary of the French language: he took the letter *A* on his hands, and wound himself up to his task with strong coffee. This produced a return of inflammation of the bladder from which he had formerly suffered, and then he gave himself overdoses of opium to still the pain. The beginning of the end was evident. Tronchin was called in too late. Too late also for the purpose were called in the offices of the clergy, whom the dying man could not satisfy that he died believing enough to entitle his corpse to Catholic burial.

Voltaire had always expressed great horror at the idea of such indignities befalling his own remains as he had seen inflicted on those of his actress-friend Adrienne Lecouvreur, and which he had branded soon afterwards in indignant verse. An actor or actress dying in harness (like Molière or Lecouvreur) was refused burial in consecrated ground as a

matter of course. *A fortiori*, a writer such as Voltaire, dying unreconciled to the Church, would assuredly not be suffered to repose in consecrated ground. Accordingly, Voltaire, on his death-bed, invited the offices of the clergy, and signed voluntarily a declaration that he died in the Catholic religion in which he was born, and, if he had ever given cause of scandal to the Church, asked pardon of God and of her. The clergy demanded a more explicit and more ample retractation, and the aged patient expired without having put his signature to the prescribed document. His Genevan physician Tronchin, who had made way in Paris, like many less skilful innovators, on the strength mainly of his innovations on the old medical practice, must be accepted as a not unfriendly though unsympathetic witness of Voltaire's last moments. The moral temperament of the two men was antipathic. Tronchin might have stood for the *σώφρων*, Voltaire for the *ἀκόλαστος* of Plato. But the whole incompatibility between them must not be set down to the charge of Voltaire. It was calm prosaic science contrasted with poetic fire, fancy, and impulse. Tronchin imposed respect on Voltaire—Voltaire by no means equally so on Tronchin. 'He is six feet high,' wrote the former, 'has the skill of Æsculapius, and the form of Apollo.' Tronchin, on the other hand, scanned Voltaire with the keen eye of the physician and physiologist, and condensed the expression of his physical, and indeed moral, state in the few following words: 'Bile always irritating, nerves always irritated, have been, are, and will be the perennial sources of all the ills of which he complains.' Tronchin, in a letter to Bonnet, compares to a hurricane the terrible excitement of Voltaire's dying moments, and declares that it reminds him of the Furies of Orestes, and that, if anything had been wanting to confirm him in his principles, Voltaire's end would have done it. Tronchin was doubtless right; but his acquaintance, professional and personal, with Voltaire having dated from the first arrival of the latter in Switzerland, he could scarcely have expected composure, resignation, and dignity on his death-bed from one who had displayed those qualities at no crisis of his life pre-

vously. That unlucky letter *A* of the French Academy's Dictionary seems to have worked his over-excited brain to the last.

Voltaire's executors had to run a race against the ecclesiastical authorities to obtain for his body the decencies of interment at a distance from Paris. His nephew, Counsellor Mignot, happened to be titular abbot of Scellières, near Troyes, and made pious haste to put Uncle underground, 'ere the bishop could bar.' Episcopal inhibition followed—the day after the funeral. Thus the old *persifleur's* last trick on the clergy was as complete a success as had been all his other tricks on that order during his long life.

Our readers, who have thus far borne us company in once more reviewing the most prominent passages of Voltaire's strangely chequered career, may perhaps expect that we should not conclude without laying before them some general estimate of his moral and intellectual influence on his age, for good or evil.

There has been no distinguished man, says Dr. Strauss, on whose whole personality it has been more customary to pass judgment in decisive and trenchant terms than Voltaire, and none to whom that treatment has been more inappropriately, we might say senselessly, applied. The same thing, indeed, might be said of such treatment, as applied to any really distinguished person. But amongst such there are, so to speak, monarchical souls, whose rich and manifold endowments, whose impulses and inclinations, all converge towards some one grand all-overruling object of effort. It might be a bald and shallow, but not absolutely absurd, way of writing of such men, to deal in general epithets—as noble or ignoble, selfish or self-sacrificing, earnest or frivolous. But Voltaire, in that sense, was no monarchical soul. If, indeed, the effects produced by him were pretty much in one direction, they were, however, the results of the complex play of powers very various, of impulses pure and impure, crossing and jarring with each other as motive forces in his mind. My name is legion, Voltaire's Demon might have said, like that of the Gadarene. In that legion, however, there were good spirits as well as evil. Even of the latter few were exactly fitted to pass into swine, if many into cats or apes.

What more, after all, can be said on a final review of Voltaire's life and writings than was said long ago in his

epigrammatic epitaph—‘*Ci-gît l’enfant gâté du monde qu’il gâta ?*’ It may, however, be worth while to examine a little more closely in what respects his age spoiled him, and he spoiled his age. A writer whom we have before had occasion to quote, on the revolutions of his country,<sup>1</sup> has observed justly :—

When you see these great flaws—which it were puerile to deny—in the French national character, don’t forget that France (at the epochs of the Saint Bartholomew and of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes) had torn out her own heart and entrails by exterminating the persons or stifling the convictions of nearly two millions of her best citizens. These are wounds which do not heal for centuries. The infliction of such wounds becomes a habit in our history. The amputation first of one member of the body politic, then of another, is the rule amongst us at every difficult epoch. Beware lest, after every noble part has been successively severed, nothing remain at last to France but an enslaved trunk. She had severe virtues; the old *régime* constrained her to become frivolous—to scatter abroad amongst foreigners her best gifts, her most solid faculties. She has retained only half her genius—*éclat*, brilliancy, mobility. But it is not with this mobile temper any nation can found its liberty.

With this mobile temper, however, Voltaire was infected by the age in which his impressible youth was passed. The *roués* of the Regency had in that age succeeded the real or pretended bigots of the last years of the Grand Monarque. The dominant Church had silenced or exterminated the *religious* dissidents who had invaded (very wholesomely to herself) her monopoly of Christian teaching. The angel that troubled the waters was put to flight, and the Bethesda of orthodoxy stagnated. But out of the stagnation sprang new and venomous swarms of *irreligious* dissidents, whom the Church had left quite out of her reckoning. All that can be said of Voltaire is, that he condensed and concentrated the irreligious ideas which were bubbling up on all sides at the opening of the eighteenth century into succinct and sparkling forms of expression, which had never before been equalled, and have never since been surpassed. As for his moral character, that also, it must be confessed, partook of the

<sup>1</sup> Quinet, *La Révolution*, vol. i. p. 212.

general laxity which dates more especially from the Orleans Regency. Then was the grand *débâcle* of all that had preserved public respect for the titularly and ostensibly leading classes in France—of all that had preserved respect in those classes for the moral bonds which hold society together. The world of rank and fashion framed for its own use a practical philosophy, which Voltaire rationalised and idealised for it in prose and verse. He became, as it were, the spiritual director-general of fashionable Irreligion, as his youthful teachers, the Jesuits, had been of fashionable Religion in the preceding century.

But the irreligion of the age got beyond Voltaire. Horace Walpole wrote from Paris to Mr. Brand in 1765:—

I assure you, you may come hither very safely, and be in no danger from mirth. Laughing is as much out of fashion as pantins and bilboquets. Good folks, they have no time to laugh. There is God and the king to be pulled down first: and men and women, one and all, are devoutly employed in the demolition. They think me quite profane for having any belief left.

The same lively writer mentions an atheistic philosopher in petticoats, who exclaimed of Voltaire—‘*Ne me parlez-pas de ce bigot-là ; il est Déiste !*’

The conceit of philosophical *honnêtes gens* in France during the eighteenth century—till the crash came—was that they could have their irreligion all to themselves, leaving a safe residue of superstition to the *canaille*. Thus Voltaire writes to D’Alembert:—

La raison triomphera, au moins chez les honnêtes gens ; la canaille n’est pas faite pour elle.

Again—

Il ne s’agit pas d’empêcher nos laquais d’aller à la messe ou au prêche.

In another place,—

Je pardonne tout, pourvu que l’*infâme superstition* soit décriée comme il faut chez les honnêtes gens, et qu’elle soit abandonné aux laquais et aux servantes, comme de raison.

Even after the first growls of revolutionary thunder were

audible, in June, 1789, we find the following entry of the Diary kept during his first visit to France by that shrewd American observer, Gouverneur Morris :—

June 11, 1789.

This morning I go to Reinsi. Arrive at eleven. Nobody yet visible. After some time the Duchess (of Orleans) appears, and tells me that she has given Madame de Chastellux notice of my arrival. Near twelve before the breakfast is paraded, but as I had eaten mine before my departure this has no present inconvenience. After breakfast we go to mass in the chapel. In the tribune above we have a bishop, an abbé, the duchess, her maids, and some of her friends. Madame de Chastellux is below on her knees. We are amused above by a number of little tricks played off by M. de Ségur and M. de Corbières with a candle, which is put into the pockets of different gentlemen, *the bishop's among the rest*, and lighted while they are otherwise engaged (for there is a fire in the tribune), to the great merriment of the spectators. Immoderate laughter is the consequence. The Duchess preserves as much gravity as she can. *This scene must be very edifying to the domestics who are opposite to us, and the villagers who worship below.*<sup>1</sup>

‘*Ah, Monsieur!*’ said a Parisian hairdresser, about the same epoch—(resolved not to lag behind the *honnêtes gens* whom he curled and powdered, at least in the article of atheistic enlightenment)—‘*ah, Monsieur, je ne suis qu’un pauvre misérable perruquier, mais (proudly) je ne crois pas en Dieu plus qu’un autre!*’

Twice in the eighteenth century France imported—first from England, afterwards from a new England—systems of philosophy and politics which, borrowed as they both were, inspired her with the conceit that it was hers alone to regenerate the whole world of thought and action in all countries, and for all ages. England and America, first through the medium of Voltaire, next of Lafayette and his fellow-comrades of Washington, set France on fire with doctrines which had left comparatively cool the lands where they were first conceived and promulgated. Locke and Newton never made the figure at home of incendiary innovators; Bolingbroke, admired as a speaker, never set the Thames on fire as a philosopher. Washington and Franklin

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gouverneur Morris*, by Jared Sparks, vol. i. p. 312.

were the most sober-minded of men whom events ever roused into revolutionists. France showed no originality but that of extravagance in her mode of appropriating theories of Mind, and Rights of Man, which, in the lands of their origin, turned no one's brains, whether of their teachers or learners. Now how came this? May we not be warranted in saying that the main cause of the difference was that England old and new possessed, and France had lost, an unmutated and independent middle class?

Where such a class has made its opinion respected in society, and its power felt in politics, it is impossible that the grave realities of life, with which it is constantly in contact, should come to be treated with that reckless levity and frivolity which marked the age of Voltaire. And it is not too much to say that in a moral and social atmosphere more bracing, Voltaire himself would have been quite a different man. That we do not speak without book is sufficiently proved by the zeal, energy, and ability with which he threw himself into any the smallest opening which presented itself for action, whether in benevolent interest for oppressed individuals, or in public affairs. We have cited the cases of the Calas, Sirvens, La Barre, and D'Etallonde. And if it be said that Voltaire's anti-Christian zealotry alloyed the merit of his Christian charity in those cases, this cannot be said of his earnest and disinterested efforts to save Admiral Byng. That unfortunate commander, we scarcely need remind our readers, was judicially sacrificed to political faction and national pride, which could not brook a single instance of French naval triumph over England, and would have imposed on Byng the Spartan alternative of destruction or victory. He had shrunk from that alternative, not, it may fairly be supposed, from want of courage; and Voltaire obtained and transmitted to Byng, in aid of his defence, the most distinct testimony from Marshal Richelieu, 'the hero of Port-Mahon,' that by acting otherwise his antagonist would have uselessly sacrificed his ships and crews. All was in vain: a court-martial capitally convicted Byng of not having done all he might have done to achieve

victory. And on such a sentence, passed on such grounds, he was condemned to be shot, as Voltaire bitterly expressed it in 'Candide,' '*pour encourager les autres.*'

Voltaire gave proof of political sagacity and patriotic feeling, which might have made him an important public man in a free country, by his persistent efforts to move that equally sagacious old profligate Cardinal Tencin (with whom he had become reconciled by that strongest of earthly motives, *idem sentire de republicâ*) to induce the government of Louis XV., or rather of Madame de Pompadour, to entertain the overtures of peace made by Frederick II., at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, when his destruction by the combined arms of Austria, France, and Russia appeared all but inevitable. The question arose for France, as Voltaire pointedly put it (certainly without any personal tenderness for his old patron-persecutor), why she should aid Austria to destroy an enemy whose destruction must draw after it that of the whole pre-existing balance of power in Central Europe. Frederick, it was said, had his capsule of corrosive sublimate ready in the last resort. Voltaire seriously and strenuously dissuaded him from the suicide he was avowedly meditating; but the imbecility of Soubise and the victory of Rosbach proved more effectual antidotes against despair. Voltaire and Tencin, in their well-meant and well-motivated pleadings for peace on the eve of defeat and the brink of bankruptcy, were contending fruitlessly with Petticoat the Second, who then ruled supreme in France. Frederick had repulsed the advances and ignored the sovereignty of the Pompadour: Maria Theresa, with more policy, if at some sacrifice of imperial-queenly dignity, condescended to messages of friendship and esteem for that royal mistress. All the foresight of Voltaire, and all the experienced tact of Tencin, found themselves unequally matched against the petty spites of the seraglio. Frederick was unlucky with women—always excepting his devoted sister, and natural and constant ally, Voltaire's not less constant friend, Wilhelmine—or rather his wayward misogynic temper never would allow him to learn how to deal with them. He was



as nearly as possible precipitated from his throne and driven to his dose of corrosive sublimate by the conspiring exasperation of Maria Theresa and the Marquise de Pompadour. The imbecile arms of France were the saving of Prussia at Rosbach and Crefeld. But Austria and France might have been saved *their* hour of humiliation by the wit of Voltaire.

Voltaire reigned paramount in French literature and philosophy for nearly half a century; his reign opening, it may be said, at his return in 1729 from his three years' exile in England, and closing with his life, 'stifled with roses' by the Parisian public, in 1778.

## VI.

*THE OLD RÉGIME IN FRANCE AND ITS FALL.*

1. *Origines de la France Contemporaine.* Par H. Taine. Tome I. *L'Ancien Régime.* Deuxième édition. Paris, 1876.
2. *On the State of Society in France before the Revolution of 1789, and on the Causes which led to that Event.* By Alexis de Tocqueville, Member of the French Academy. Translated by Henry Reeve, D.C.L. Second edition, with seven additional Chapters. London, 1873.
3. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, sa Vie et ses Ouvrages.* Par Saint-Marc-Girardin. Avec une Introduction par M. Ernest Bersot, Membre de l'Institut. 2 vols. Paris, 1875.<sup>1</sup>

It required an intellectual intrepidity, in which M. Taine is not deficient (witness his Gallic invasion of the whole domain of English literature), to project the completion of a work which Tocqueville had left unfinished—the work of tracing the formation and development of contemporary France through the ‘Ancien Régime,’ the Revolution, and the successive ephemeral Governments which followed. In his present volume he carries that enterprise no farther than Tocqueville had already proceeded with it, and he works, as he could not otherwise than work, on the lines laid down by his precursor.

The French Revolution, as it is truly observed by Tocqueville, will remain inscrutably dark to those who fix their eyes upon itself exclusively. ‘The only light which can clear up that darkness must be sought in the times preceding it.’ Not less truly it might be said that France, as she now is, can only be understood by tracing the distinctive characters of that revolution to their original sources in the previous state of France under the old régime.

We suppose there is no instance of an order of things, in

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, April 1876.

the midst of an active-minded and progressive people, surviving for centuries its original *raison d'être*—its social and national utility—so extraordinary as that which was afforded, down to August 4, 1789, by the old feudalism of France, with all its oppressive incidents. If we were asked, What made the French Revolution the terrible thing it was? we should answer in three words—The French Monarchy. The persistent policy of the French monarchy for centuries had been to paralyse and annul in action every independent organisation in France but its own; and when it was itself struck at last with a like paralysis, no resisting power was left against the popular masses. Had not Louis XIV. been able to say, with truth, '*L'État, c'est moi!*' the populace of Paris might never have been able to boast, '*La Nation, c'est nous!*'

M. Taine divides into five sections his study of the old régime in his present volume, entitled respectively—1. 'The Structure of Society;' 2. 'Manners and Characters;' 3. 'The [revolutionary] Spirit and Doctrine;' 4. 'The Propagation of the Doctrine;' 5. 'The People.'

It may be laid down as a general rule, admitting but few exceptions, that most arrangements and most disarrangements between class and class—between man and man—are concerned, directly or indirectly, with money, or money's worth. Without disputing Mr. Carlyle's dictum that cash payment never can be the sole nexus between man and man, we find, nevertheless, cash payment, or some ruder equivalent in simpler times, the most universally current mode of recognition of service given and received. So long as the service is in some shape rendered, men do not grudge the payment; or, at any rate, whether or not grudgingly, they feel they must make it. The clergy and feudal nobility of France had performed for the people, during the darkest ages of European history, the services most indispensable to soul and body—to spiritual and secular protection from utter disorganisation and despair. The clergy alone opened and multiplied asylums for the conquered and oppressed over the whole territory. The clergy alone preserved in its churches

and convents all that remained of the arts and acquirements of antiquity; alone held the pen in the councils of long-haired and hard-headed men of war; alone vindicated the reign of law, the sanctities of religion, property, and marriage. The nobles alone (valour then constituted nobility) rallied round them all who could bear arms and who would submit to vassalage as the price of protection:—

‘In a time of permanent war,’ says M. Taine, ‘one régime only is good—that of armed force posted in the presence of the enemy. Such is the régime of feudalism. One could live at least, or begin again to live, under its steel-gloved hand. Under the double title of sovereign and proprietor, the seigneur reserved for himself the waste lands, rivers, forests, rights of chase. These rights did not much wrong to anyone, as the country was half desert, and the lord employed all his leisure in hunting wild beasts. He alone having anything that could be called capital, he alone could build mills, baking-ovens, wine-presses, bridges; could establish ferries, make roads, embank ponds, rear or purchase bulls. Accordingly he levied dues for all these services, and monopolised their performance. By degrees the fetters of feudal obligation became relaxed, and the sentiment of feudal loyalty became rooted. The lordship, the county, the duchy became objects of local patriotism. Thus revived, after a thousand years of suspended animation, the most powerful, energetic, and vivacious of the sentiments that maintain society amongst men—a sentiment the more potent in its influence the wider its range. In order that the little feudal country may merge in the nation, it suffices that the seigneuries recognise a central power in the sovereign, and that the king stand forth as head and chief of the nobles.’

If the French nobility could have transformed themselves in modern times from a military into a political aristocracy largely dashed with democracy, as in England, the evolution from feudalism into modern life and laws might have been gradual, as in England, and the evils and excesses of the French Revolution obviated. Or if it had been recast on the Prussian model into a phalanx of instructed and serviceable military and civil functionaries, the monarch might have made use of them in peace or war, as in Prussia, and the monarchy might have been saved.

It is not necessary, however, to look to England, and

still less to Germany, for examples of the manner in which a feudal might have been transformed into a political aristocracy in France, and combined with other classes in all the practical functions of local administration. The instruments for effecting that transformation lay ready at hand in France herself; in the old institutions of the provinces called *pays d'État*, in each of which the local administration had formerly been carried on under the King's Government by the *gens des trois états*, as they were then called, *i.e.*, the representatives of the clergy, the nobility, and the commons. But the King's Government chose to break those instruments instead of using them. 'A small portion,' says Tocqueville, 'of the perseverance and the exertions which the sovereigns of France employed for the abolition or the dislocation of the provincial estates would have sufficed to adapt them to all the wants of modern civilisation, if those sovereigns had ever had any other aim than to become and remain the masters of France.'

The old provincial liberties had substantially survived, down to the Revolution, in two important provinces only—Brittany in the west, Languedoc in the south of France. In Brittany the nobles had the right individually of attending the States in person, which made their meetings, according to Tocqueville, a sort of Polish diets. But in Languedoc the better system prevailed of representation of the three orders. The nobles were represented by twenty-three of their order, the clergy by the twenty-three bishops of the province, and the towns had as many representatives as the two first orders taken together. The peasantry do not appear to have been directly represented, unless so far as the resident nobles and clergy really represented their interests—and so far it certainly seems they did, that the States of Languedoc imposed no *corvées* on the peasantry, but executed public works, which no other province dreamed of undertaking, without either robbing private proprietors of their lands or wretched peasants of their labour. The States of Languedoc presented for centuries a model of vigorous and successful local administration, which the central government, under

Richelieu, crushed for a moment, but which was happily restored in the minority of Louis XIV., and flourished till the Revolution. Two or three years before that event the Government of Louis XVI., so many of whose good intentions went to pave a bad place, instituted throughout France provincial assemblies of a very different type from the States of Languedoc, and which served no purpose but substituting popular anarchy for royal despotism. All local affairs were devolved on local assemblies elected by ignorant constituencies, and no provision made for any executive agency or any central control. The States of Languedoc had presented an unique spectacle of three orders, which elsewhere fell into fatal discord, working together in perfect harmony in a single assembly. As the *tiers-état* had an equal voting power to that of the two other orders, its spirit became diffused through the whole body. The three magistrates, who, under the name of *syndics généraux*, were entrusted with the general conduct of business, were always lawyers, that is to say, *roturiers*. Ecclesiastics were almost always delegated to discuss with the ministry at Versailles whatever points of dispute might arise between the States and the royal authority. 'It may be said,' concludes Tocqueville, 'that, during the whole of the last century, Languedoc was administered by bourgeois, controlled [or rather influenced] by nobles, and assisted by bishops. And thus the spirit of modern times came to penetrate peacefully this old institution, and modify everything while destroying nothing. It might have been so everywhere else throughout France.'

But the King's Government in France had aimed for centuries to convert the nobles into courtiers, thus drawing them away from the natural sphere of their influence, where they might have been useful (and formidable), to make them mere ornamental appendages of royal state; mere servile accomplices in crushing the peasantry, whom it was their special duty to protect, under an overwhelming load of feudal and fiscal dues and imposts from which they had bargained for their own exemption. This system of self-

exemption from their share of public charges, as ultimately from public duties of all descriptions, save military and Court service, began as far back as Charles VII. and the wars of the Plantagenets. 'It was at that era,' says Tocqueville, 'that the nation, fatigued with the long disorders which had followed upon the captivity of King John and the insanity of Charles VI., suffered the kings to impose general taxes without consulting it, and that the nobles had the baseness to let the *tiers-état* be taxed at discretion, on the condition only that they themselves should be left untaxed. I cannot but admire the singular sagacity of Philip de Commines in saying that "Charles VII., who carried this point of imposing the *taille* without the consent of the States, laid a heavy burthen on his own soul and the soul of his successors, and inflicted on the kingdom a deep wound, which will long bleed."'

It was impossible for M. Taine to take any other view than Tocqueville had taken of the ultimate consequences of throwing on the peasantry the main weight of taxation, and leaving the amount of that taxation discretionary to the King's Government from year to year. But even that unlimited concession to royalty with regard to the *taille* did not place it in funds to defray the extravagant expenditure of the Court in the last ages of the monarchy, when, having converted its nobles into courtiers, it had to attach its courtiers by dividing among them the spoils of the people. Another source of supply was hit upon in France, unparalleled elsewhere in modern European history, the regular sale of judicial and municipal appointments. It is remarked by Tocqueville that these practices were resorted to by the best, as well as the worst, French monarchs. 'It was Louis XII. who completed the system of the sale of offices. It was Henri IV. who first put up to sale the hereditary succession to them. So much stronger are the vices of a system than the virtues of those who conduct it.'

The sale of judicial offices, of municipal functions and privileges to the towns, and of titles of nobility to all who had money to purchase them, became the regular and

habitual financial resource of a Government which had, once for all, resolved not to go for supplies to the representatives of the people. To the people it was at last compelled to go by convoking the States-General of 1789, but not till the people had become thoroughly exasperated by the rapacious and spendthrift system of centuries. For centuries two most oppressive aristocracies, or rather three, had been favoured at their expense: first, that of the old nobles, who, as we have seen, had surrendered the vassals they should have protected to *taille à merci et à miséricorde*, to save themselves from their fair share of the public taxation. Secondly, the bastard aristocracy of the long robe, and the *nouveaux nobles*, who, or whose forefathers, had bought with hard money their bran-new titles or hereditary judicial offices, and had therewith purchased the supercilious scorn of the old nobility, and the envy and hatred of all who had not money wherewith to purchase privilege. Lastly, a sort of third bourgeois aristocracy, so far as regarded exemption from *taille*, consisting of the holders of petty municipal offices in the towns, which were constantly being multiplied by the Government for no purpose but to sell them—the charters of the towns, at recurring short periods, being revoked and renewed, solely for the purpose of selling those offices over again! That such a system should have gone on with continual aggravations in a country calling itself civilised—the most civilised in Europe—till nearly the close of the last century—left little to wonder at in revolution, except that it came no sooner.

The main weight of all these accumulated abuses in the matter of taxation—the most vital point where political abuses make themselves felt—fell on the broad but bent shoulders of *Jacques Bonhomme*—the peasant of the old régime. And that weight was increased infinitely in oppressive effect by its incalculableness from one year to another. It lay in the breast of the *conseil du roi* and the *contrôleur-général* what addition should be made year by year to the amount of the *taille*; what public works should be undertaken, in what province, and what *corvées* (forced labours),



at arbitrary and inadequate wages, imposed on the peasantry for their execution. It lay in the breast of the military administration what troops should be marched, in what directions—*corvées*, again, on the wretched peasantry to provide means of transport, and probably get their horses lamed without compensation. But, besides all these burdens, laid mainly on Jacques Bonhomme's shoulders by the King's Government, were those laid exclusively on his shoulders not by the King's Government, but by the hereditary holders of feudal rights and dues—themselves, in large proportion, a most impoverished class, whose presence in the country was felt by the peasant only through their incessant exactions—felt the more gallingly as relics of a system of feudal dependence whose *raison d'être* (the payment of services for protection) had long ceased. The great nobles in the last ages of the monarchy were, for the most part, adorning Versailles and Paris with their (often unpaid for) fripperies; the poor provincial nobles—*hobereaux*, as Jacques Bonhomme nicknamed them—were snatching the last fowl from the peasant's pot in payment of their feudal dues—if, indeed, the *poule au pot*, which Henri Quatre wished for the peasant's pot, ever found its way there.

'Picture to yourself,' says Tocqueville,<sup>1</sup> 'a French peasant of the eighteenth century, or, I might rather say, the peasant now before your eyes, for the man is the same; his condition is altered, but not his character. Take him as he is described in the documents I have quoted—so passionately enamoured of the soil, that he will spend all his savings to purchase it, and to purchase it at any price. To complete this purchase he must first pay a tax, not to the Government, but to other landowners of the neighbourhood, as unconnected as himself with the administration of public affairs, and hardly more influential than he is. He possesses it at last; his heart is buried in it with the seed he sows. This little nook of ground, which is his own in this vast universe, fills him with pride and independence. But again these neighbours call him from his furrow, and compel him to come to work for them without wages. He tries to defend his young crops from their game; again they prevent him. As he crosses the river they wait for his passage to levy a toll. He finds them at the market, where they sell him the right of selling his own produce;

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Reeve's Translation, p. 37.

and when, on his return home, he wants to use the remainder of his wheat for his own sustenance—of that wheat which was planted by his hands, and has grown under his eyes—he cannot touch it till he has ground it at the mill and baked it at the bakehouse of these same men. A portion of the income of his little property is paid away in quit-rents to them also, and these dues can neither be extinguished nor redeemed.

‘Whatever he does, those troublesome neighbours are everywhere in his path, to disturb his happiness, to interfere with his labour, to consume his profits; and when these are dismissed, others in the black garb of the Church present themselves to carry off the clearest profit of his harvest. Picture to yourself the condition, the wants, the character, the passions of this man, and compute, if you are able, the stores of hatred and of envy which are accumulated in his heart.’

An incident related in Rousseau’s ‘Confessions,’ which M. Taine does not cite, probably because he supposes it already familiar to French readers, is strikingly illustrative of the sort of vexatious espionage practised on the French peasantry for the purpose of discovering fresh matter for fiscal extortion, and which was naturally encountered by every art of concealment of whatever means they possessed. The incident occurred in a youthful journey on foot between Paris and Lyons.

One day in particular, having wandered out of my road to look at a landscape which attracted me, I fairly lost my way altogether, and, after hours of unavailing effort to retrace it, weary and half-dead with thirst and hunger, I entered a peasant’s house of no very promising aspect, but which was the only house I saw within reach. I expected to be made welcome, as in Geneva or Switzerland, where all the inhabitants in any tolerable circumstances are ready to exercise hospitality. I begged the peasant to give me dinner, which I said I would pay for. He set before me skimmed-milk and coarse barley-bread, telling me it was all he had. I drank the milk with eagerness, and ate the bread, straw and all, with good appetite; such fare, however, was not very restorative for a man exhausted with fatigue. My host, who was watching me, inferred the truth of my tale from the evidence of my appetite. All at once, exclaiming that he saw I was an honest young man, who did not come there to inform on him, he opened a little trap-door beside his kitchen, descended, and returned a moment after with a loaf of brown wheaten bread, a ham very appetising though well cut into, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which

rejoiced my eyes more than all the rest. To these good things he added a tolerably substantial omelet, and I made such a meal as no one ever did but a foot wayfarer. When it came to paying, his uneasy apprehensions again laid hold on him; he would have none of my money, and refused it with renewed symptoms of alarm. I could not conceive what he was afraid of. At last he uttered with trembling the terrible words of '*commis*' and '*rats-de-cave*.' He gave me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the *aides*, that he concealed his bread because of the *taille*, and that he should be a ruined man if it came to be suspected that he was not dying of hunger. All that he said to me, and of all of which I had no previous idea, made an impression on me which will never be effaced, and was the germ of that inextinguishable hatred which has since developed itself in my heart against the oppressions endured by the poor miserable people and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dared not openly eat the bread he had earned by the sweat of his brow, and could escape ruin only by making show outwardly of the same indigence as reigned all round him. I left the house full of indignation as of compassion, and deploring the lot of a country on which the bounties of nature have been lavished only to leave her the prey of barbarous publicans [revenue farmers].

Contrast the condition thus imposed, under the old régime, on the great majority of Frenchmen, the actual cultivators of the soil, with that of the classes partially, when not wholly, exempt from fiscal imposts.

'In the bishop, the abbot, or the count,' says M. Taine, 'the king respected the possessor of feudal rights while reducing to subjection the former rival in sovereign power. The king felt that he himself was only the most privileged of the privileged. Treaties, precedents, immemorial usage, founded on former independent positions, forbade fiscal exactions from nobles who were once sovereigns. In Alsace, the foreign princes, lords of the soil, the Teutonic order, and that of the knights of Malta, enjoyed entire exemption from all contributions, real or personal. In Lorraine, the Chapter of Remiremont had the privilege of taxing itself. Throughout the provinces, whether *pays d'État* or *pays d'élection*, the *taille* only reached the property of nobles through their *roturier* tenants. Accordingly, in the Limousin, and other districts, where the main part of the products of the soil were from pasture and vineyards, the noble owner took care to keep his property in his own hands, or those of his agents, thus exempting himself and them from the unwelcome visits of the collector. Further,

the exemption of the privileged orders extended to their servants and servants' servants, from being drawn for the *milice*, from having troops quartered on them, and from subjection to forced labour on public works, roads, &c. Besides the poll-tax (*capitation*), intended equally to reach all, being assessed according to the *taille*, the nobles paid little, having little *taille* to pay. "In the provinces," wrote Turgot, "the capitation of the privileged orders has undergone successive reductions to a very low figure, while that of the *taillables* almost equals the amount of their *taille*." Towards the privileged orders, besides, the collectors thought themselves obliged to observe *ménagements*. The Duke of Orleans [afterwards Philippe Égalité] avowed, "*Je m'arrange* with the intendants. I pay pretty much what I choose." And then complained that the new provincial assemblies instituted two or three years before the Revolution, by assessing him strictly, were going to make him lose 300,000 *livres de rente*.'

Under the old régime, adds M. Taine, exemption from imposts was a last rag of sovereignty, or at least of royal or noble independence. The prince or noble evaded or resisted taxation not only as detriment, but dishonour. It was the sufferance badge of *roture*, that is to say, of servitude, and he repulsed the tax-gatherer quite as much from pride as interest.

The princes of the blood, in fact, retained many rights of sovereignty. Throughout the domains forming their appanages, and extending over more than twelve of the present departments, the appointments to ecclesiastical benefices and judicial offices were in their hands. They were a sort of lesser kings, and received not only the dues which the king would have received as *seigneur*, but a portion of those he elsewhere received as sovereign. The House of Orleans, for instance, received the *aides*, that is to say, the duties on wine and spirits, on manufactures of gold, silver, iron, steel, cards, and starch—the whole amount, in short, of one of the largest branches of indirect taxation. It was not surprising if princes so nearly placed in the position of sovereigns had, like sovereigns, a council, a chancellor, a *debt*, a court, and whole code of domestic ceremonial.

It was not perhaps surprising, but it was surely scandalous, that the Duke of Orleans, like other *princes du sang*, with all their appanages, was an importunate and successful applicant to royalty for out-door relief. During the life of

his father he had received a pension from the Crown of 150,000 livres (francs) on the plea of poverty. The succession to his father having enriched him above 3,000,000 per annum, he resigned his pension, but presently again applied for it, representing to the king that he found his expenditure exceed his income. The Prince de Conti had 1,150,000 francs from Louis XVI. to pay his debts. Any noble gentleman, or noble lady, who had debts to pay (especially under the Calonne and Brienne ministries, which just preceded the Revolution) had only to ask the good easy monarch for money to pay them with—and get it. ‘*Quand j’ai vu,*’ said a courtier of that epoch, ‘*que tout le monde tendait la main, j’ai tendu mon chapeau.*’

The Court, said D’Argenson (and the courtiers called him *la bête*, for speaking the truth about them), became in effect ‘the only senate in the nation ;’ and such a senate was of course often swayed by its most worthless members, or parasites, male or female. The Court was the only institution of the country left standing towards which all eyes were turned ; and the pomp of Versailles, costly and cumbrous as it was, was not more than proportioned to the use made of it—an use, however, which ended by rendering nobles and king alike useless. That use was to keep a whole nobility occupied daily in *doing nothing*—or, in official language, in discharging their duties about the king’s person. It was, as M. Taine observes, a courtly continuation of the old feudal homage. The staff of nobles was bound to appear daily *en grande tenue* around their born general. Absence from Court, or slack attendance there, was regarded as a mark of independence or indifference, and never escaped the vigilant eye of Louis XIV. glancing round his circle. The Duke de Laroche-foucauld, *grand veneur* under that monarch, was a model of the courtly virtues. For ten years together he would miss no day’s attendance at the royal *lever, coucher, chasse*, or promenade, with the appropriate and prescribed change of dress for each. And in more than forty years he had not slept twenty times out of Paris, or asked leave for any more latitude of movement than occasionally to dine out *en ville*, thus missing his usual attendance on the royal promenade.

To reduce a *noblesse* to mere idle ornaments of a Court was for the monarch to subject himself to the like servitude as he imposed. The king, says M. Taine, had undertaken to find occupation for a whole aristocracy, and by consequence to show himself, and *payer de sa personne* at all hours, even the most private, even when getting out of bed, or when getting in.<sup>1</sup> M. Taine describes the royal *lever* as a piece in five acts. ‘Nothing certainly could be more skilfully devised for occupying a whole nobility about nothing.’ But, on the other hand, the king had himself to undergo the idle constraint he imposed on his nobles. ‘He, too, had his part to play. Every one of his movements and gestures had been arranged beforehand. He had to regulate his countenance; to modulate his voice; to do the dignified and affable; to distribute his glances and inclinations of the head with due reserve and distinction; to say nothing at all, or only speak about hunting; and put a prudent extinguisher on his own thoughts, if he happened to have any. For a descendant of Louis XIV. to eat, drink, get up, or go to bed, was to officiate.’ Frederick II. of Prussia, after all these etiquettes were explained to him, said that, if he were king of France, he would appoint another king to hold Court in his place.

During the magnificent and ruinous reign of the Grand Monarque the French Court had become, as M. Taine describes it, a *salon en permanence*, or, as he varies the description in another passage, French Court life had become an opera. Of the cost of that opera to the people, who had no seats there, we have already said something, and shall have some-

<sup>1</sup> Poor Marie Antoinette, unaccustomed to etiquettes so preposterous, could not endure them at all. M. Taine quotes as follows from Madame Campan: ‘La reine déjeune dans son lit, et “il y a dix ou douze personnes à cette première entrée” . . . Les grandes entrées faisaient leur cour à l’heure de la toilette. “Cette entrée comprenait les princes du sang, les capitaines des gardes, et la plupart des grandes charges.” En tout trois entrées le matin chez la reine. Même cérémonial que pour le roi au sujet de la chemise. Un jour d’hiver Mme. Campan présentait la chemise à la reine; la dame d’honneur entre, ôte ses gants, prend la chemise. On gratte à la porte, c’est la duchesse d’Orléans, elle ôte ses gants, reçoit la chemise. On gratte encore, c’est la comtesse d’Artois qui par privilège prend la chemise. Cependant la reine grelottait, les bras croisés sur sa poitrine, et murmurait: “C’est odieux quelle importunité!”’

thing further to say. Its ultimate cost to France, in the character of her Revolution, is not paid yet in full. It has cost her the whole structure of her national institutions, the whole continuity of her national life.

There is, we suppose, no parallel in history to the century of Court life in France, intervening between its first complete organisation under Louis XIV. and the common catastrophe of Court and monarchy under his unfortunate successor, Louis XVI. The successive phases of that life are brought before us in characteristic detail in M. Taine's volume. A stately decorum and grand style of decoration and diversion could alone, of course, flourish in the dignified and imposing presence of the great founder of Court life in France, whose really eminent personal qualities might, it would seem, have made him the founder of something better than a system which sunk her nobility to a *valetaille*, and reduced the art of government of a great country to the art of playing the part of a courteous host to all-approving guests. When the Grand Monarque's career of conquest was followed by the crushing reverses of the war of the Spanish succession, the military glory of France suffered a long eclipse; and the French *noblesse*, during the eighteenth century, with rare exceptions, ceased to render the sole serious service by which a courtier-military caste could distinguish itself. Instead of celebrating victories, the courtiers were reduced to *chansonner* defeats, and to solace themselves for the disasters of campaigns with the success of epigrams. The song indited on the battle of Hochstaedt (which we English call Blenheim) was voted good-for-nothing; and some one said thereupon, 'I am sorry for the loss of that battle—*la chanson ne vaut rien*.' Defeats and *chansons*, however, improved in quality in the last half of the century; and it was decided in Court circles that the song on the shamefully-lost battle of Rosbach was charming. The stern realities of active life had lost their import for a class which had ceased collectively to take any active part in them; and life by daylight, indeed, had in a manner been all but superseded by life illuminated by crystal chandeliers and reflected in gilt mirrors. The tone

of society, alike in the *salon* and on the stage, had become thoroughly histrionic.

The limits of the sphere of dream,  
The bounds of true and false were past.

The universal passion for amateur dramatic performances of itself characterises the century.

‘Towards the end of the century,’ says M. Taine, ‘all the world became actors. All the world, indeed, were actors already. Nothing was talked of but the little theatres of the great in the environs of Paris. For a long time back, the example had been set by the highest personages. Under Louis XV., the Dukes of Orleans, de Nivernais, d’Ayen, de Coigny, the Marquesses of Courtenvaux and d’Entraignes, the Count de Maillebois, the Duchess de Brancas, the Countess d’Estrades, formed, with Madame de Pompadour, the theatrical company of the Petits Cabinets—manager, the Duke de la Vallière. When a ballet was introduced in the piece, the *danseurs en titre* were the Marquis de Courtenvaux, the Duke de Beuvron, the Counts de Melfort and de Langeron. “All those,” writes the sage and pious Duke de Luynes, “who are skilled in these matters agree that professional actors could hardly play better, or with more intelligence of their parts. At last the dramatic contagion reaches even the royal family. At Trianon, first before an audience of forty persons, and afterwards before audiences much less select, the queen [Marie Antoinette] plays Colette, in the *Devin du Village*; Gotte, in the *Gageure Imprévue*; Rosine, in the *Barbier de Séville*; Pierrette in the *Chasseur et la Laitière*. The other performers are the leading personages of the Court, the Count d’Artois, the Counts d’Adhémar and de Vaudreuil, the Countess de Guiche, the Canoness de Polignac. Monsieur [afterwards Louis XVIII.] had his theatre; the Count d’Artois his *two* theatres; the Duke of Orleans *two*; the Count de Clermont *two*; the Prince de Condé *one*. The Count de Clermont took serious parts; the Duke of Orleans played to the life (*avec rondeur et naturel*) the rôles of peasants and financiers. M. de Mirosmesnil, *garde des sceaux*, was the slyest and supplest of Scapins; M. de Vaudreuil was regarded almost as a rival of Molé; the Count de Pons played the *Misanthrope* with rare perfection.” “There are ten or more of our women of the *grand monde*,” wrote the Prince de Ligne, “act and sing better than the best I have seen or heard at any theatre.” By the talent acquired, we may judge of the study devoted to acquire it. Evidently, for many of these personages, this must have been the main occupation of life.

‘The last trait of the time, and the most significant, was the *petite*



*pièce*. For the *beau monde*, indeed, life itself was a carnival, scarce less rakish than that of Venice. The slight (and loose) material of these *petites pièces* was commonly taken from the farces of the Italian buffos, or the "Contes" of La Fontaine, and they were sometimes so far the reverse of decent as to be only fit to be performed before great princes, or gay ladies of a certain description. The Duke of Orleans sang songs the most highly spiced on the stage; and the performances at Brunoy [Monsieur's] waxed so licentious that the king expressed his regret to have come there. Two ladies of the audience fairly took flight; but the worst enormity of all was that the queen had been invited to witness the performance. Gaiety,' says M. Taine, 'is a sort of intoxication which drains the cask to the last drop, and when the wine is drunk out, drinks the dregs. Not only in their *petits soupers* with girls, but in the *grand monde* with ladies, these great persons give themselves freedoms only fit for taverns. *Tranchons le mot*—they behave like blackguards [*polissons*]. "During the last six or seven months," writes a lady in 1783, "suppers are followed by a game of blind man's buff, or a *traîne-ballet*, and finish off with a *polissonnerie générale*. People are invited a fortnight beforehand. On this occasion the tables and furniture were upset, twenty water-decanter and their contents scattered about the room. I did not get away till half-past one, half-dead with fatigue, half demolished with *coups de mouchoir*, leaving Mme. de Clarence with her voice gone, with her dress torn into a thousand pieces, with an arm grazed, a contusion in the head, but delighted to have given so gay a supper, and flattering herself that it would be the prime topic of the next day." Such,' says M. Taine, 'are the last excesses of the unbridled rage for amusement. Under its sway, as under the sculptor's hand, the physiognomy of the age transforms itself gradually till it loses all stamp of seriousness. The formal countenance of the courtier first relaxes into the jovial air of the *mondain*. And at last, from the altered and distorted lines of that smiling mouth, breaks forth the rude and reckless laugh of the *gamin*.'

In the meantime, with all this 'pride of life' of Versailles and Paris (not unattended by its known scriptural concomitants), where was the life of France? In Paris and Versailles—nowhere else, so to speak. 'Sad is the aspect,' says M. Taine, 'of a country where the heart has ceased to impel the blood through the veins.' The testimony of our countryman, Arthur Young, as to the internal state of France—which he surveyed with the eyes of a farmer and a freeman in three

tours through that country between the years 1787 and 1792—is the testimony (and the fact is gratifying to Englishmen) most universally and most reliantly cited by all the best French writers from Tocqueville and Léonce de Lavergne to M. Taine. While a double file of carriages, going and returning, stretched from morning to night without interruption over five leagues of road between Versailles and Paris (such, says M. Taine, is the description given him by old people who witnessed the courtly spectacle before 1789), great was the contrast, and almost complete the solitude, on the other royal roads which pierced France in straight lines in all directions, designed and constructed with right royal disregard of the ‘holy bounds of property,’ and the yet holier liberties of labour.

‘The road to Orleans,’ says Arthur Young, ‘is one of the greatest that leads from Paris. I expected, therefore, to have my former impression of the little traffic near that city removed, but, on the contrary, it was confirmed; it is a desert compared with those round London. Knowing how great, rich, and important a city Paris is, this circumstance perplexes me much. Should it afterwards be confirmed, conclusions in abundance are to be drawn.’

At Nantes, whose flourishing colonial trade the Revolution was soon to ruin, Arthur Young notes the like contrast of town and country.

Arrive; go to the theatre, new built of fine white stone, and has a magnificent portico front of eight elegant Corinthian pillars, and four others within, to part the portico from a grand vestibule. Within, all is gold and painting, and a *coup d’œil* at entering that struck me forcibly. It is, I believe, twice as large as Drury Lane, and five times as magnificent. It was Sunday, and therefore full. *Mon Dieu!* cried I to myself, do all the wastes, the deserts, the heath, ling, furze, broom, and bog, that I have passed for 300 miles lead to this spectacle? What a miracle, that all the splendour and wealth of the cities in France should be so unconnected with the country! There are no gentle transitions from ease to comfort, from comfort to wealth: you pass at once from beggary to profusion; from misery in mud cabins to Mademoiselle St. Huberti, in splendid spectacles, at 500 livres a night (21*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*). The country deserted, or if a gentleman in it, you find him in some wretched hole, to save

that money which is lavished in profusion in the luxuries of a capital.

We may here remark, in passing, that *ruined châteaux*, like peasant properties in France, are no exclusively post-revolutionary phenomena. Arthur Young says of Verteuil, a chateau near Angoulême of the Duchess d'Anville, where he was most hospitably received—

It is excellently kept; in thorough repair, fully furnished, and all in order, which merits praise, considering that the family rarely are here for more than a few days in a year, having many other and more considerable seats in different parts of the kingdom. If this just attention to the interests of posterity was more general, *we should not see the melancholy spectacle of ruined châteaux in so many parts of France.*

The truth really was that, even if a violent revolution had not supervened, the old *noblesse* of France was going rapidly to ruin in its condition of powerless privilege. Twenty country gentlemen could not meet to discuss their own business without express royal permission. And, indeed, all business, except in the *pays d'État*, had in a manner been taken out of their hands. Nothing was left them but naked titles and obnoxious privileges. Excluded by the royal bureaucracy of the intendants and their sub-delegates from all public functions, and by their pride of birth from all lucrative occupations, there was nothing left them but to vegetate in the country or ruin themselves in town. M. Taine cites Bouillé's 'Memoirs' for the statement that 'all the old families but two or three hundred are ruined.' 'Everything,' M. Taine adds, 'contributed to that decadence—laws, manners, and, first of all, the *droit d'aînesse*.'

'In Brittany,' says Chateaubriand, 'the elder sons of the nobility carried off two-thirds, and the younger divided among them one-third of the paternal heritage. Consequently, the younger sons of younger sons soon descended to the division of a pigeon, a rabbit, a duck-pond, and a sporting dog. My grandfather's whole fortune did not exceed 5,000 *livres de rente*, to two-thirds of which (3,300 *livres*) his eldest son succeeded, leaving 1,666 for the younger members of the family, and even on that residue the eldest levied a *préciput* (preference share).'

It is curious to observe how some of the same effects, which are now, we think justly, charged on the rigid enforcement of equal division of peasant properties among children, resulted in old France from the rigid enforcement of *unequal* division of noble estates. But the *droit d'aînesse* was intended at least to keep *one* member of the family rich—the eldest son. Generally speaking, it did not even effect that. A class condemned to inactivity in all local and all national affairs had only the choice of living in mortal ennui in the country, or *ambitiosa paupertate* in town. None but the wealthiest could bask in Court sunshine without paying for it at a rate altogether ruinous. None but those in credit at Court could benefit by those auriferous streams—that royal Pactolus—which flowed for courtiers only. The tone of the Court nobles was that of supreme contempt for all attention to money matters. ‘My Lord Archbishop,’ said Louis XVI. to M. Dillon, ‘it is reported that you have debts, and heavy debts.’ ‘Sire,’ said the aristocratic prelate, ‘I will ask my steward, and shall then have the honour to inform your Majesty.’ This superb contempt for taking any account of money led to the dire necessity for making money by all possible means, except only the honourable means of earning it. When the auriferous streams of royal bounty failed to flow freely enough, the noble squanderers were fain to make money *ad exemplar regis*, by selling judicial offices—the *justices seigneuriales* being the last fragment of feudal sovereignty that remained to them.

‘The sable swarm of judicial leeches,’ says M. Taine, ‘sucked blood all the more eagerly because they had bought the right to suck it. The arbitrariness, caprice, and corruption of such a system may be better conceived than described. “Impunity,” says Renaudon, “is nowhere more complete than in the *justices seigneuriales*. No attempt is made to bring the most atrocious crimes to justice, for the seigneur is afraid of having to defray the expense of a criminal trial, and his judges and attorneys of not being paid their fees and costs. Accordingly his estates become the asylum of all the ruffianry of the canton.” Terrible consequence of his sordid indifference—soon to recoil on himself. To-morrow at the club the pettifogging practi-

tioners he has multiplied will demand his head—the lawless banditti he has tolerated will stick his head on a pike.’

‘There is nothing harder to bear in poverty,’ writes the great Roman satirist, ‘than that it makes the men who have to bear it ridiculous.’ The pretentious poverty of most of the provincial nobles of France in the last century, amidst the growing wealth of the active classes, did, it must be confessed, make them more or less ridiculous to all above, as their pride and rapacity made them odious to all below, them.

‘Many of them,’ says M. Taine, ‘had sold everything that belonged to them, except their little manor-houses and seignorial rights, including the rights of maladministration of justice over the domains of which they were once the proprietors. As the feudal dues payable to them formed their whole means of living, they were compelled to exact those dues, even when the exaction was oppressive—even when the debtor was indigent. How could they let him off his payments in kind in corn and wine, when these were their whole supply of bread and wine through the year? How could they let him off his payments in money, when it was the sole money they received? Themselves necessitous, how could they be otherwise than rapacious? Behold them, then, face to face with the peasant, simply in the position of creditors! That is the finale of the feudal régime of protection, as metamorphosed by monarchy. Behold round the chateau peasant sympathies expiring, envy awakening, hatred growing. Excluded from affairs, exempted from taxes, the *seigneur* stands isolated amongst his former vassals. His authority annihilated, and his privileges preserved, make for him a life apart. He never takes a step out of his solitude but to add involuntarily to the public misery. From the products of a soil already shorn by fiscal imposts, he comes in to claim so many ears of corn, so many vats of wine. The crops of the peasant are half devoured by his game or pigeons. What can be saved from these the peasant must take to be ground at his mill, and a sixteenth part of the meal stays there. If the peasant again sells for 600 livres a field he has bought of the noble (and paid for), 100 livres of the proceeds of the sale go into the noble’s pocket. A year’s income of the heritage of a peasant’s brother likewise goes to the noble before any benefit of that heritage reaches the peasant. The latter, such as we see him at this day, eagerly intent on gain, determined and habituated to do and endure anything, with the prospect in view of saving or gaining a crown of three francs, ends

by casting side-looks of rage at the TURRET which contains the feudal archives, the detested parchments, on the strength of which a man of another species—benefited to the detriment of all, and receiving tribute from all for doing nothing—extorts his privileged portion from all soils and from all products. Let but opportunity offer—the archives will burn—with them the turret—with that the chateau.’

With reference to the generally accredited myth of bands of *brigands* having sprung out of the earth suddenly, no one knew whence or how, to plunder and burn chateaux, all that can be said is that it is true enough there were brigands, but amateur brigands—peasants brutalised by ignorance and oppression. Arthur Young, in his ‘Second Travels,’ says on this point—

I asked M. de Morveaux [the celebrated chemist, then resident at Dijon] how far it was true that chateaux had been plundered and burnt by the peasants alone; or whether by those troops of brigands reported to be formidable? He assured me that he has made strict inquiries to ascertain this matter, and is of opinion that all the violences in this province, which have come to his knowledge, have been committed by the peasants only; much has been reported of brigands, but nothing proved. At Besançon I heard of 800; but how could a troop of 800 banditti march through a country, and leave their existence the least questionable?—as ridiculous as M. Bayes’s army *incog*.

The general state of the peasantry, in the revolutionary year 1789, is painfully illustrated by an incident mentioned in the same Travels.

Walking up a long hill, to ease my mare, I was joined by a poor woman, who complained of the times, and that it was a sad country. Demanding her reasons, she said her husband had but a morsel of land, one cow, and a poor little horse, yet they had a *franchar* (forty-two pounds) of wheat and three chickens to pay as a quit rent to one seigneur; and four *franchars* of oats, one chicken, and 1s. to pay to another, besides very heavy *tailles* and other taxes. She had seven children, and the cow’s milk helped to make the soup. ‘But why, instead of a horse, do you not keep another cow?’ ‘Oh, her husband could not carry his produce so well without a horse, and asses are little used in the country. It was said, at present, that *something was to be done by some great folks for such poor ones, but she did not know*

*who nor how*, but God send us better, *car les tailles et les droits nous écrasent.*' This woman, at no great distance, might have been taken for sixty or seventy, her figure was so bent and her face so furrowed and hardened by labour; but she said she was only twenty-eight. An Englishman who has not travelled cannot imagine the figure made by infinitely the greater part of the countrywomen in France. It speaks, at the first sight, hard and severe labour. I am inclined to think that they work harder than the men, and this, united with the more miserable labour of bringing a new race of slaves into the world, destroys absolutely all symmetry of person and any feminine appearance. To what are we to attribute this difference in the manner of the lower people in the two kingdoms? To GOVERNMENT.

The government of France throughout its thirty provinces (except the *pays d'État*) had been carried on till the establishment of provincial assemblies, just before the Revolution, by the king's intendants and their sub-delegates, responsible only to their royal employers.<sup>1</sup> The opinion of France—which was chiefly concentrated in Paris—was formed by the *salons*. The privileged classes, practically excluded from all public influences and all public duties, except those precious ones of which we have spoken, about the king's person, were restricted to the sole function of receiving company, the sole occupation of amusing themselves and others.

'If a man of high birth,' says M. Taine, 'was sent into a province with the title of governor, it was for show only. While the intendant administered, *he* received company and gave dinners. These were the sole functions of a *grand seigneur*, and, by consequence, religious and political questions were, for him and his circle, subjects of conversation, and nothing more. In good company, it was held, anyone had the right to say anything. The social machine, besides, had gone on working of itself, so to speak, from time immemorial. Was it likely to be deranged by the careless chat of a *salon*? In any case, it was not he that conducted it, or could be responsible for its going right or going wrong. Accordingly, all uneasy reflections, all

<sup>1</sup> The clever Scotch financier Law, no prophet in his own country, who was unfortunately entrusted by the Regent Orleans with the pilotage of French finance, said to D'Argenson, 'Know that you have neither Parliaments nor États, nor Governors. The happiness or misery, the plenty or scarcity of the provinces, wholly depend on thirty masters of requests, to whom their absolute administration is committed.'

morose preoccupations, were thrown aside. Lightly, boldly, the great lord followed wherever his pet philosopher led the way. Unconcerned in affairs, he could give himself the free range of ideas; like a young man of family fresh from college, who, having got hold of a principle, draws all possible deductions from it, and so constructs himself a system without the least in the world troubling his head about practical applications.'

To reduce an aristocracy to inaction, says our author, is to create a *Fronde*. The ridiculous heroes (and heroines) of the *Fronde* of the seventeenth century had their parallels, male and female, in the eighteenth. The *salons* furnished the field of battle, the Court—its partial favours and failings—the causes of war. His Majesty's Opposition met nightly under gilt mouldings and multitudinous wax-lights. His Majesty's Government had in hostile array against it all those courtiers who felt themselves slighted in the distribution of Court favours; all those provincial nobles who found themselves outside the door while the Court nobles partook of the royal banquet within; all those of the king's subjects, finally, who, seeing his Government assume the rôle of Providence upon earth, and take everything on itself, were disposed to cast on it the entire responsibility for everything—from the price of bread to the bad state of a road. Lastly, the old Government had in hostile array against it the New Humanity, which accused it of upholding unchanged the superannuated remains of a barbarous system—taxes unequally imposed, unduly apportioned, and oppressively levied; antiquated procedures, atrocious punishments, religious persecutions, *lettres de cachet*, and State prisons.

Two remarkable incidents of the old régime are given in the *Memoirs of Malouet*; and we are rather surprised M. Taine has not thought them worth citing. One is a robbery which was committed on Malouet by a servant, who broke open his writing-desk, and took out of it sixty louis and two pairs of lace wristbands. The Lieutenant of Police at that time (in the last years of Louis XV.'s reign) was M. de Sartine, of whom the well-known story is told, that a thief having excused his delinquency by pleading, 'Monseigneur, I must



live !' Sartine replied, 'I don't see the necessity,' and had him hanged accordingly, notwithstanding his plea of 'extenuating circumstances,' which probably would not have failed of better success with a French jury at the present day. The robber of Malouet's writing-desk having been caught, and having confessed the robbery, Malouet was informed that in such cases, of what was legally described as *vol avec effraction*, the practice was to hang the malefactor before the door of the house he had robbed. This in Paris, in the *beau milieu* of the eighteenth century ! It reminds us of the mode of executing Highland justice, proposed about the same period by the gracious Captain Duncan of Knockdunder. 'He would hang the men up all three in one row before coot Leddy Staunton's windows, which would be a creat comfort to her in the morning to see that the coot shentleman, her husband, had been suitably afenged.'

Malouet addressed himself in vain to M. de Sartine to deviate from the usual mode of proceeding in this instance. He next had recourse to the intercession of Madame Adélaïde, daughter of Louis XV.; and the thief, instead of being hanged, was imprisoned in the Bicêtre. On the death of Louis XV., the benevolent Malesherbes, who had come into the ministry, made a philanthropic tour of the prisons, under the impression that he should find cases of abuse of power. Malouet's thief contrived to persuade him that he was unjustly imprisoned on mere suspicion, and Malesherbes set him at liberty, his first use of which was to threaten proceedings against his former master for false imprisonment, and claim back *his* money. Sartine laughed heartily at the merciful man's recompense; and the thief's previous written confession having been looked up, the police were again set on his traces, for he had disappeared after his strange bravado, and some six months after he was recaptured and replaced in the Bicêtre. Malouet relates another incident which is truly shocking, and which occurred a good many years after, in 1785, while he was Intendant of the Civil Department of Naval Administration at Toulon.

6

'On the arrival of D'Estaing's squadron [from the West Indies] I had no money to pay off the crew, to whom an enormous amount of pay was owing. Marshal de Castries, the minister, was as much at a loss as myself, and sent me a small sum on account, the first claimants on which were the ship-captains. I could not bring myself to discharge the sailors without paying them; but many of these unfortunate men, dreading the contagious fever their ships had brought back with them from the West Indies, and impatient to return to their homes, went off without leave and without money. Want compelled them to stop passengers on the high roads, and six of them having been taken, and tried at Aix, were sentenced to breaking on the wheel, when their last words on the scaffold were—"If we had been paid what was owed us, we should not be here now." The deplorable fate and last words of these men,' says Malouet, 'drove me to despair. I went to Marseilles, borrowed 100,000 crowns, and paid off the crews. M. de Castries, who was not less afflicted than myself at what had happened, approved my conduct, and enabled me to repay the loan I had raised.'

The feeling was excellent; but what is to be said of a Government which had money for every extravagance of the Court and none for the public service?

The good company of the *salons* had objections of other kinds to everything established. The *aimables oisifs*—'the hundred thousand people who had nothing to do but divert themselves'—regarded the established religion as a most irksome pedagogue—always scolding, always hostile to the pleasures of the senses and the use of the reason. The established principles of sexual morality, sneered at as *la morale bourgeoise*, were another stumbling-block and rock of offence to the Richelieus, Lauzuns, Tillys—in short, to all that world of libertine gallantry for whom irregularity was the sole rule of life—who were well pleased to learn from the lips of their pet philosophers that marriage was a conventional prejudice, and well prepared to applaud Saint-Lambert when, raising a glass of champagne to his lips, at a supper at Mademoiselle Quinault's, the actress (where Madame d'Epinay was one of the guests, and reports the trait), he gave as a toast, 'The return to Nature, and the manners of Otaheite!'

The long robe and even the cassock in the high places of

the hierarchy were in those days under no more restraint than the laced coat. M. Taine quotes the following passage from the unpublished reminiscences of an ex-*Parlementaire*, whom, he says, he is not at liberty to name:—‘When I entered the world, in 1785, I was introduced at once to the wives and mistresses of the friends of my family, and passed my evenings alternately in the *soirées* of the former and those of the latter. And I was not eighteen! And I belonged to a family of hereditary rank and standing in the magistracy!’ From the lives of Church dignitaries in old France it would not be difficult to infer their principles. But in most cases, says M. Taine, we are spared the trouble of inference. M. de Brienne, Archbishop of Sens, and afterwards of Toulouse—last minister but one, and the most feeble and fatal minister of Louis XVI. before the meeting of the States-General; M. de Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun; the Abbé Maury, who became the most eminent champion of the Church in the Constituent Assembly, were notorious sceptics. Another (lay) sceptic, Rivarol, affirms that, on the eve of the Revolution, the clergy (the dignified clergy) equalled in enlightenment the philosophers. And the Archbishop of Narbonne, in describing the resistance of the higher clergy in 1791 to the political attacks on the Church, describes that resistance not to steadfastness in the faith, but sense of professional honour. ‘We behaved at that epoch,’ he says, ‘like true gentlemen, for most of us could not be said to be actuated by principles of religion.’ The chief ministers of religion having thus, as it were, tacitly acknowledged her throne vacant, we come to inquire what new spiritual powers had supplanted those still ostensibly, and still legally, dominant. In other words, what was the ruling French philosophy of the eighteenth century?

There were two philosophies which successively swayed opinion in the course of that century—the laughing, satirising, and scoffing philosophy of Voltaire, and the *larmoyante*, sentimental, and rhetorical philosophy of Rousseau. The former held undisputed ascendancy in the first half, the latter contested it in the second half of the century. Vol-

taire's light artillery of satire and criticism was long ascendant above all rivalry in the *salons*. Rousseau's strange combination of philanthropy and misanthropy first made a new sensation in the *salons*, and—what was more momentous—first stirred the passions of the people. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the character and writings of Rousseau were the most important and influential moral phenomena of the eighteenth century. They struck the keynote of Revolution; they woke the responsive vibrations of every aspiring and every revolting heart in France. Everything that was uttered, in speech or writing, on the popular side, during the brief but passionate period of revolutionary ascendancy, consisted of mere variations on the original theme of Rousseau. 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, *ou la mort*,' had summarised the whole democratic doctrine of the 'Contrat Social' before coming to form the watchword of Robespierre's Reign of Virtue and Terror.

The curious thing is that Rousseau, in enunciating that astounding dogma, distinctly guarded it, like his other moral and social paradoxes, from all supposition of applicability anywhere but in small and simple communities. The Jacobins seized on the dogma, and ignored the reservations:—

'I find two men,' says M. Saint-Marc Girardin, 'in the "Contrat Social," the one prudent and moderate, the other daring and despotic. Which of the two has most excited attention—which of the two has chiefly furnished contemporaries and posterity with political watchwords? One must know mankind very little to suppose that the good sense was what it listened to—that the paradox was what it cast aside and rejected. Men are caught by audacity, and only return to good sense when they are at last fatigued and disgusted with paradox.'

In all Rousseau's writings, as the same intelligent and impartial critic, the late Saint-Marc Girardin, truly says, his tactic was to begin with some startling singularity, in order to arrive in the end at some sensible and sober commonplace. In his lucid intervals he had much less of the innovator than of the reactionist against speculative innovation. Every one found this out who wrote or talked to him as if

he held in earnest those of his published opinions which first attracted public attention and admiration. When George III. rallied Wilkes on his demagogue antecedents, on some occasion of his attendance at Court as City Chamberlain, his reply was—‘Your Majesty, I never was a Wilkite.’ Rousseau was, in effect, continually answering all who came or wrote to consult him about education, suicide, or State institutions, that he never was a Rousseauite.

The epoch at which Rousseau awoke one morning and found himself famous was that of the publication of his first paradoxical ‘Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts.’ Rousseau himself says that his idea of declaring war against all art and all science first flashed on him while walking to Vincennes to visit Diderot, who was imprisoned there. Instantaneously on the thought striking him, he says he threw himself on the grass in the avenue of that fortress, and lay there half-an-hour in a state of such agitation that, when he got up again, he found the front of his waistcoat all wetted with his tears, without the least consciousness of having shed them. A preternatural inundation! Laharpe tells a different story, and the truth was perhaps somewhere between the two. When Rousseau, he says, told Diderot of the question proposed for a prize by the Academy of Dijon—‘Whether the progress of the arts and sciences has contributed to corrupt or purify manners?’—Diderot asked him, ‘Which side are you going to take?’ ‘I am going,’ said Rousseau, ‘to demonstrate that the progress of art and science purifies manners.’ ‘Eh! that is the *pons asinorum*,’ rejoined Diderot. ‘Take the other side—you will make a noise *du diable*!’ Rousseau took the other side, and the prophecy of his friend was more than fulfilled. His ‘Discours,’ besides being ‘couronné,’ made a noise *de tous les diables*.

We should be unjust to Rousseau, as well as to the multitude of his sectaries, male and female, including such a respected name as Malesherbes—succeeded as they are, in these times, by admirers of his genius and writings more limited in numbers, more limited still in devotion—if we ascribed to the mere sensation excited by systematic paradox

the influence of the ideas he was the first to promulgate in direct opposition to the fashionable philosophy of his time. The deeper source of Rousseau's immense influence over the mind and heart of his age was his impassioned appeal to Nature, and the Religion of Nature, against modes of thought, and still more modes of life which had become estranged from both.

Chamfort, the most petted author, and the most envenomed enemy, of the Court of Louis XVI. in its last years, describes a courtier, M. de V., as saying, 'So rare is any real sensation or sentiment, that, returning from Versailles, I stop sometimes in the streets to look at a dog gnawing a bone.' Not only the outside but the inside of every life, says M. Taine, was factitious. There was what Kant might have called a 'categorical imperative'—imposed by the fashion of an age which, in society at least, had reversed the Salic law and made Woman queen—not only on the precise correct manner of walking, sitting, saluting, picking up a glove, or presenting an object—but equally on the manner of thinking, feeling, living, and dying. This reminds us of the judgment passed on the death-bed of Talleyrand in those Parisian circles which preserved the traditions of the last century in the present: '*Il est mort en homme qui savait vivre.*'

What could bring a little natural heat into French life in the last century? Voltaire did not feel the want of it; Diderot and Rousseau did, and each in his way, the latter with marked success, addressed themselves to supply it. But Diderot, as the Patriarch of Ferney truly said, was an over-heated oven, which burned whatever it baked. Rousseau, too, brought strange fire upon French hearths and altars. Still it was an immense merit in his own day and generation to remind Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of such things as hearths and altars. Rousseau brought God and the Child into fashion—after a fashion of his own. His new accents of passion and sentiment, in an age of mere gallantry, took women by storm; nay, he even made it the fashion for women to nurse and caress their children. In a less vicious age, his Héloïse would scarcely have passed for a paragon of

feminine excellence, nor his Savoyard vicar for a perfect pattern of life and doctrine. But Rousseau's female models, whom no idealism could invest with refinement, had been Madame de Warens, and his servant-maid mistress, Thérèse. And Rousseau's Savoyard vicar was himself, with his most besetting frailties. However, all things are relative, and there was an upward look towards good morals in life-pictures which portrayed, at least, better morals than those of Crebillon *films* in fiction, or of Richelieu or Lauzun in fact:—

'What to us seems gross,' says M. Saint-Marc Girardin,<sup>1</sup> 'in the "Nouvelle Héloïse," may be regarded as a commencement of comparative purity at the time it came out; and the loves of Julie and Saint-Preux, which we should have liked more delicate, seemed almost too delicate as compared with those depicted by Crebillon *films*. All depends on what point one starts from. To anyone who starts from the *petites maisons* of the Regency, the Charmettes might seem a Reformatory, and the groves of Clarens a sanctuary. The eighteenth century, tired of the monotony of its libertine novels, felt obliged to Rousseau for setting pictures before it on which the eye might rest without the cheek blushing. As Rousseau painted love in another manner than his precursors, he received credit for painting a higher and purer love. The amorous hero and heroine of the Héloïse passed almost for Platonic, because they were not libertine.'

The publication of 'Héloïse' at once established sensibility as the universal passion—or fashion:—

'Into every detail of life,' says M. Taine, 'sensibility drags its emphasis. One builds in his park a little temple to Friendship; another sets up in her boudoir a little altar to Beneficence; a third adopts a costume à la Jean-Jacques Rousseau, analogous to the principles of that author; others select for head-dress *poufs au sentiment*, where may be placed portraits of one's daughter, of one's mother, of one's canary, of one's pet dog, with hair of one's father, or one's *ami de cœur* for garnish. The ladies have their female friends *de cœur* too, for whom they feel "something so deep and so tender, as to amount really to passion," and whom they cannot live without meeting at least thrice in the day. It is the fashion especially for every woman, at the sight of M. de Voltaire, to be suddenly affected with an

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Marc Girardin, *Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 198.

all-over-ishness—to throw themselves into his arms, stammer, weep, and fall into a state of emotion, exhibiting all the symptoms of the most passionate love. When an author of fashion reads a piece in a *salon*, it is the correct thing for ladies to explode in cries and sobs, and for at least one fainting fair to need unlacing. Madame de Genlis, who laughs at all these affectations, adds a few of her own. She would suddenly call out in the middle of a large party to the young orphan she matronised and exhibited—“Pamela, do Héloïse!” And thereupon Pamela, to the applause of the whole assembly, would let down her hair, kneel, and lift up her eyes to heaven with a look of inspiration. Sensibility, in fact, had become an institution.’

It might be added that Revolution was soon to make it acquainted with strange bedfellows. M. Taine tells us that the first number of the ‘*Mercure*’ that appeared after the massacres of September 1792 contained in its first column an elegy—

‘AUX MANES DE MON SERIN!’

It is truly remarked by M. Saint-Marc Girardin, that the writings of Rousseau teem with the strangest contradictions a human soul could exhibit. His ‘*Émile*,’ like his previous paradoxical discourses against the arts and sciences, breathed a spirit of independent, almost savage, individualism; whereas in his ‘*Contrat Social*,’ which the passions of the coming time converted into a grim gospel of Jacobinism, Rousseau denudes the individual man of all independence whatever—strips him successively, in the assumed interest of the State, of every individual right. He takes away from him that of family, that of property, and, to complete his subjection to the State, he takes away from him even the right of cultivating any personal relation with his God. Rousseau’s Citizen (he was the first to import that title into France from Geneva) receives from the State a God and a religion of State fabric, as he receives from the State all his other rights and all his other sentiments.

The political writings of Rousseau, more than any other single influence, determined the peculiar political character of the French Revolution. And the political system of Rousseau may be shortly stated as the system of Hobbes



democratised—an eighteenth-century edition of the *Leviathan ad usum plebis*. 'Never was there a more complete code of despotism than that which was laid down with the method of madness in the 'Contrat Social;' and that code was not less Draconic in its sanctions than despotic in its character.'<sup>1</sup> Louis XIV. had pronounced *L'État, c'est moi!* and the Paris populace, when it had learned the politics of Rousseau from Robespierre, alike assumed to itself the whole power of the State in the abused name of the nation. Rousseau had expressly declared the will of the nation at all moments sovereign. He had declared that, in the exercise of that sovereignty, no rule could be prescribed to it, whether it should adhere to-day to its will of yesterday, or change it. But in a great country, to ascertain or collect the will of the whole people at any moment being impossible, it followed by revolutionary logic that the nearest populace on every emergent occasion assumed itself, as a matter of course, to be the people, and imposed its will on the central or local powers for law. Rousseau had long been a wilful and systematic paradox-monger before he became a maniac; but never, in his wildest or wilfullest illusions, could he have dreamed that the Civil Religion, set forth in his new version of democratic Hobbism, would so soon, with the pikes of the populace for its secular arm, have its Reign of Terror in France.

Could the spirit of Burke revisit the sphere of earthly politics, it would be to find reproduced by the ablest pens of France all those darkest lineaments of the French Revolution which drew down on him, when first prophetically traced in his immortal 'Reflections,' the loud and angry protests of those who claimed in his day to stand forth as the special

<sup>1</sup> The 'Contrat Social' provided for the establishment of a *civil religion* (destined to be idly parodied in Robespierre's 'Fête de l'Etre Suprême') one article of which was the sacredness of the 'Contrat Social' and its derivative laws. This new religion was to be maintained in observance by a new Inquisition. 'If anyone,' it was laid down, 'after having publicly subscribed to these doctrines, conducts himself as if he did not believe them, let him be punished with death; he has committed the greatest of crimes: "*il a menti devant les lois.*"'

and exclusive representatives of Liberal principles. From France itself come the most emphatic testimonies to the truth of every word Burke uttered on the nature and portents of her vast volcanic upheaval. Whether we turn to the calm philosophic pages of Tocqueville—to those of the late Prevost-Paradol, Edgar Quinet, Renan, Le Play, Janet, or last, not least, M. Taine—all alike abjure the politics of popular despotism, which the great Apostle of Vanity, as Burke designated Rousseau, worked so powerfully to render supreme in France. All alike trace mainly to the political religion of the ‘Contrat Social’ the specific shape assumed there by democratic anarchy and democratic dictatorship and terrorism. And the concurrent tribute to the insight and foresight of our illustrious countryman is the more remarkable as the less conscious and intentional. There has been on the part of recent French writers on their great Revolution no conscious concurrence in raising a monument to Burke. Not the less effectively have they assisted in raising it—not the less will it stand perennial and colossal.

Where Burke’s view of the French Revolution was incomplete, was in his perception, not of its nature, but of its sources. These we have endeavoured to illustrate from the abundant materials before us. The eminent critical faculty which M. Taine had amply proved in his former works, comes out conspicuously in the lucid view presented in his present volume of the special adaptation of the French philosophy of the last century to satisfy the fastidious conversational tastes of a very intelligent, but very superficial, upper-public, and the utter incompetence of the *raison raisonnée* alone cultivated by that public to explore the historical antecedents and actual conditions of the life of a nation, and therefore to form any sound or trustworthy judgment what changes its political and social constitution might need or could bear. The world of that day, says M. Taine, for want of comprehending the past did not comprehend the present; had no accurate idea of the peasant, the working man, the provincial bourgeois, or even of the

provincial noble. All these figures they saw half-effaced by distance, transformed and embellished by philosophical theories and the haze of sentiment. *Jacques Bonhomme* let them know who he was presently, and he is letting every one again know who he is now. He is the overwhelmingly preponderant Constituent Power of France, by grace of Universal Suffrage.

The following observation of Dumont, in his 'Souvenirs sur Mirabeau,' on the causes of the French Revolution (he would have expressed himself more correctly by saying on the causes which stamped on the French Revolution its special and distinctive characters of sophistry and atrocity) is pregnant with much matter for reflection :—

People argue without end about the causes of the Revolution. In my opinion, it had only one determining and efficient cause—the *character of the king*. Substitute for Louis XVI. a monarch of firm and decided character, and the Revolution would not have taken place.

Dumont should have said—*such* a revolution would not have taken place as that which fatally developed itself.

'His whole reign,' proceeds Dumont, 'had no other effect than that of bringing it on. There was no time during the first [Constituent] Assembly at which the king, could he but have changed his character, might not have recovered his authority, and established a mixed constitution, firmer and more solid than ever had been the parliamentary and nobiliary monarchy of France. His indecision, his weakness, his half-councils, his half-measures, ruined everything. Secondary causes did but develop that first cause. When the prince is weak, courtiers become intriguing, demagogues insolent, the people audacious. Honest men are intimidated, able men discouraged, the best advice followed to no fruitful issue. A king who should have shown dignity and energy of character would have drawn towards himself all who, as matters went, took part against him. The Lafayettes, the Lameths, the Mirabeaus, the Siéyès, would not even have conceived the idea of playing the part which they actually did play; and, having been set to work on quite another plan, would have seemed quite other men.'

In all revolutions there are two principal factors. First, a general change which has taken place in men's minds,

necessarily drawing after it some corresponding change in their social relations. Such a general revolution of mind was already accomplished in France, even before the accession of Louis XVI. to the throne. Secondly, the characters and passions of men, and the posture of affairs at the final epoch when organic reforms in the State force themselves on for discussion and adoption. It is perfectly true that Louis XVI.'s whole reign tended to bring on revolution; but it is equally true that this tendency was in men's minds before it was in public measures. The whole question was whether the King's Government should show itself able to take a decided initiative in those measures which the temper of the times required; and in old France those measures must in substance have been revolutionary, however appearances might and ought to have been saved in form; or whether it should wait till the initiative was taken out of its hands by the people—or rather by the agitators who had the ear of the people—whether reforms should be planned by statesmen or dictated by demagogues. It is quite true, as Dumont says, that the one thing needful in 1789 was a king of firm and decided character. The king's name was the sole tower of strength left in France; and a king who should have felt that strength, and discerned its use, might have saved France from the sinister turn of events that followed. Even Louis XV., in his last enfeebled years, had struck a successful *coup d'état* by abolishing the *parlements* and setting up a new judicature in their stead—a good riddance of the arrogant pretensions to political power in those bodies, and a good clearance of the ground for a genuine constitutional system. True, Louis XV. and his chancellor Maupeou had struck down the *parlements* in the sole interest of despotism. But not less true that Louis XVI., with a Machault or Turgot beside him, might have raised some more substantial structure of political liberties on the site whence these turbulent and antiquated assemblies had been thus summarily swept away. One of the first steps, however, of the young monarch on his accession, under the plausible and popularity-seeking misguidance of Maurepas,

was to restore the *parlements*, and again gratuitously expose the measures of the King's Government to the fitful and capricious opposition of those inept and irresponsible bodies. When the Chancellor Maupeou's dismissal from the ministry was announced to him by the Duke de la Vrillière, he contented himself with saying, '*J'avais fait gagner un grand procès au roi, il veut remettre en question ce qui était décidé ; il en est le maître.*'

We have ourselves little doubt that if instead of Louis XVI. there had mounted the throne of France, in 1774, a king possessed of the political genius of Mirabeau, the pure public spirit of Turgot, with the sword of Frederick II. of Prussia in his hand, and with Frederick's army at his back, such a king might have impressed on the French Revolution what direction he pleased—except a retrograde one into the old *ornière* of aristocratic privilege and plebeian oppression. But was it to be expected that a prince born in the purple, brought up amidst those empty forms of Court ceremonial which Louis XIV. had taught the nobility of France to regard as the main duties they had to discharge to their king and country—was it to be expected that one who did not wield the sword of Frederick, nor was backed by such an army so officered and so disciplined as that which Frederick's father had placed at his absolute disposal, should, at the crisis of the fate of France and of Europe, have had energy to impose, or power to enforce, submission alike on aristocratic arrogance and democratic impatience? Louis XVI. would have needed both a firm will and a reliable force—neither of which he possessed—to have taken successfully the initiative in carrying out that royal revolution which he had in effect commenced when he called together the States-General.

At that momentous epoch France displayed the double phenomenon, elsewhere unparalleled, of a moneyed class malcontent in proportion to their investments in public securities, and a landed class revolutionary in proportion to their purchases of landed property. Paris furnished three distinct contingents to the grand army of national discontent,

which had been everywhere recruiting from about the middle of the eighteenth century. First, the *frondeuse* philosophy of the Liberal-aristocratic *salons*. Secondly, the increasing ill-temper of a moneyed *bourgeoisie*, galled in its *roturier* self-respect by the irrepressible insolence of the Court nobles, and alarmed for its investments, which had become considerable, in Government securities by the perpetual prospect of recurrence to the old royal resource of bankruptcy. Thirdly, the turbulent element, comparatively of recent growth, of a large *prolétaire* population, whose numbers in the metropolis are calculated to have been doubled during the reign of Louis XVI. by the exceptional franchises accorded in that reign to the manufacturing faubourgs. And beneath and behind these metropolitan hotbeds of revolution lay that vast subject stratum of twenty millions of French peasants, the last to receive, but, when once fairly aroused, the most formidable recipients of that impulse to change which, for a whole generation at least, all classes above them seemed emulously eager to give. Peasant penuriousness had, in many instances, scraped together the means to purchase the lands which noble prodigality found itself forced to sell. But, as the bourgeois fundholder felt no conservative sense of safety in his public securities, so the peasant landowner had no unvexed enjoyment of his newly acquired property. He might be said to have acquired little else than extended liability to the double and overwhelming pressure of seigneurial dues and government taxes.

In this state of things the tranquil *insouciance* of the privileged orders seemed proof to all portents.

‘Never,’ says M. Taine, ‘was blindness more wilful and more total. The Duke of Orleans offered to bet a hundred louis that the States-General would separate without doing anything—without even abolishing *lettres de cachet*. After the work of demolition was actually commenced—nay, after it was consummated—the privileged orders arrived at no more correct judgments. They had no idea of what the social edifice was; they had never put a hand to it. They ended by thinking that it would be best to let it fall completely, without an effort to save it. It would not fail to rebuild itself of its own accord—they should not fail to re-enter their *salons* restored and

regilt, and recommence the agreeable conversation interrupted for the moment by an accident—a street-tumult. Clear-sighted in society, their eyes were dim in politics. They saw everything admirably by the artificial light of wax-candles, but natural daylight confused and dazzled them. Their visual organs, applied so long to the delicate details of polished life, had no clear apprehension of popular life—the life of the masses; and in the new element in which they found themselves suddenly plunged, the very fineness of microscopic perception they possessed destroyed their insight.

‘It was necessary however to act, for danger was at their door, at their throats. But the danger was a danger of an ignoble description, and their education afforded them no appropriate arms against it. They had learned fencing, but not boxing. To engage in conflicts with porters and *poissardes*, to take their antagonist at the club by the collar, to harangue at street corners, to bring fists and cudgels to bear on the brutes and madmen who employed no other argument than that of physical force (as the *jeunesse dorée* did with good effect at a later epoch), to take up the truncheon of special constable, to spare neither their own skin nor the skins of others, to confront the common people in the guise of common people—these were simple and effective modes of proceeding. But to have recourse to them did not even enter into the heads of well-bred persons; they neither knew how nor chose to make use of their hands for such work. Such a thing was never seen as for a gentleman arrested in his own house to break the head of the Jacobin clubbist who arrested him. To make a disturbance or scene of any kind would have been bad taste. For them the first consideration was to remain what they were, *gens de bonne compagnie*. In prison, men and women dressed with care, paid and received visits, held *salons* at the end of the corridor by the light of four candles. No matter; they could exchange pleasantries, devise madrigals, sing songs, pique themselves on being as gay and gallant as ever. Must one become morose and ill-bred merely because one finds oneself accidentally lodged in a bad inn? Before their revolutionary judges—on the cart to the guillotine—they retained their smile and dignity. Women in particular went to the scaffold with as much ease and serenity as though they were going to a *soirée*.

When the sword of France fell from the feeble hand of Louis XVI. the question for the future was, What firmer hand should finally grasp it? When Authority ceases to command traditional respect, Force alone can compel obedience. Force, indeed, is the *ultima ratio* of all authority; but where the legitimacy of the established powers of the

State has not been called in question—where the continuity of the national existence has not been broken—force never nakedly occupies the foreground of the political scene. The value of the sanction of time and usage to authority is not felt till it is lost. It was lost to the old monarchy of France in July 1789, and its armed substitute was not effectively established till November 1799—the epoch of the 18th Brumaire. Within those ten years the wheel of Revolution had run full circle—the advocate's tongue and the popular journalist's pen had finally given place to the Soldier of Fortune's sword.



## VII.

*THE REIGN OF TERROR AND ITS SECRET POLICE.*

1. *Histoire de la Terreur, 1792-1794, d'après des Documents Authentiques et Inédits.* Par Mortimer-Ternaux, Membre de l'Institut. Vols. I.-VII. Paris, 1869.
2. *Tableaux de la Révolution Française: publiés sur les Papiers Inédits du Département et de la Police Secrète de Paris.* Par Adolphe Schmidt, Professeur d'Histoire à l'Université de Jéna. 3 vols. Leipzig, 1867-1870.
3. *La Démagogie en 1793 à Paris; ou Histoire, jour par jour, de l'Année 1793, accompagnée de Documents contemporains rares ou inédits, recueillis, mis en ordre, et commentés.* Par C. A. Dauban. Ouvrage enrichi de seize gravures, &c. Paris, 1868.
4. *Paris en 1794 et en 1795: Histoire de la Rue, du Club, de la Famine; composée d'après des Documents inédits, particulièrement les Rapports de Police et les Registres du Comité de Salut Public.* Avec une Introduction par C. A. Dauban. Ouvrage enrichi de gravures du temps et d'un fac-simile. Paris, 1869.<sup>1</sup>

FRENCH Revolution history (it was high time!) is being rewritten. Professor Von Sybel, in Germany, is bringing to completion his comprehensive survey of the history of the Revolution Era in France, and the *contre-coup* of that tremendous explosion in Europe. The valuable work of M. Mortimer-Ternaux has been interrupted by his untimely death; but where it breaks off—at the fall of the Gironde—the publications of Professor A. Schmidt, of Jena, and of M. Dauban take up the thread of the history of the Terror, and effectively contribute, each in his way, to the picture of a great capital and a civilised country subjected to what M. Thiers has called the sombre and ragged rule of the multitude.

Professor Schmidt and M. Dauban are both literary investigators of that useful class who make it their business to

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review* July 1872.

‘attend to the neglected and remember the forgotten.’ The former takes precedence (at least in date and singleness of scope) in a field of research in which both have been employing their time and pains very serviceably to future historians of the French Revolution, viz., in bringing under the light of publicity, for the first time, the reports of the police ‘observateurs’ (Anglicè, spies) kept in pay by the ephemeral holders of power, or at least of office, during its successive phases. Professor Schmidt’s protracted labours in the reproduction of the police records of that period—which had lain undisturbed ever since the epoch at which they were penned, in their dusty official cartons in the central Archives of France, formerly entitled ‘Archives of the Kingdom,’ afterwards ‘Archives of the Republic,’ to-day (1867) ‘Archives of the Empire,’ and on the morrow, we may add, of that day (1871) again ‘Archives of the Republic’ (who knows what new name to bear on the morrow of that morrow?)—will furnish materials of very substantial value to the future historian of the Revolution, and have already, we are told by Professor Schmidt, in the preface to his third volume, been characterised, to his lively gratification, as ‘precious’ by M. Mortimer-Ternaux, ‘the truly critical author of the “*Histoire de la Terreur*.”’

The two very curious and interesting volumes published by M. Dauban, entitled respectively ‘*La Démagogie en 1793 à Paris*,’ and ‘*Paris en 1794 et en 1795*,’ &c., are drawn, in like manner, from documents of the time, but of more miscellaneous character, and owe much of their entertaining quality to the somewhat indiscriminate variety of their sources. For our present purpose we shall chiefly concern ourselves with those portions of them which, like the bulk of the contents of Professor Schmidt’s volumes, consist of the secret communications which paid ‘observateurs’ then, as at more remote and more recent periods, were in the habit of making to their patrons and employers in office of all they could collect, by poking about in all quarters of Paris, of the state of popular opinion and feeling on men and things generally, and with special reference to the question which

Revolution placed most in jeopardy—the daily question of *daily bread*.

The twofold character of French Revolutionism, from its birth-hour to the present day—that which renders its movements apparently endless in their recurrence as fruitless in their results—is one which seems, at first sight, self-contradictory—combining the most outrageous contempt for law with the most implicit submission to any and every ephemeral usurping public power that does but assume the insignia, no matter how conferred, of legal authority. But the contradiction vanishes when it is remembered that contempt for law was for ages a royal prerogative, and submission to the delegates of the lawless power of the Crown the habit of the people. Law, for ages in France, had neither supplied the sanction nor prescribed the limits of obedience; royal functionaries had acted as the delegated depositaries of absolute power; and when these became revolutionary, they did not lose their habit of lawless absolutism, nor did the subject masses shake off theirs of servile and implicit obedience. The well-meant effort of the Constituent Assembly to decentralise and distribute public powers through every grade of official hierarchy, and every field of local action, only produced a multiplication of petty potentates, each doing what seemed good in his own eyes, and exerting himself, to the extent of his influence or impudence, to make all around him do what seemed good in his eyes likewise. Every petty municipal, newly entitled to tie a scarf on his shoulder, held himself therewith entitled to wield unlimited and irresponsible powers, so far as he could get unscarved citizens to obey them. And this habit of French functionarism of exerting a vigour beyond the law survives down to our day.

The two years' terror of 1792–4, like the two months' terror of 1871, was the work of a set of men who themselves acknowledged that they did not represent France, and of whom it may be affirmed, with equal certainty, that they did not represent Paris.<sup>1</sup> Having seized power by surprise, they

<sup>1</sup> 'The Jacobins,' says Von Sybel, in his *History of the Revolution Time*, vol. iv. c. 5, 'could not conceal this fact from themselves. "All France is

could only hope to keep it by terrorism. They had against them large—we can scarcely say *decided*—majorities in two successive Assemblies—first in the Legislative Assembly, afterwards in the National Convention—though the latter body was elected under the terrifying impression of the September massacres, planned and executed by the usurping insurrectionary Commune of Paris, its parliamentary or ex-parliamentary leaders in the background, and its subsidised satellites in the lowest dregs of the Paris populace.

The sovereignty of Paris, involving that of France, was usurped in a single night—that of the 9th-10th of August, 1792—by a knot of conspirators calling themselves the commissaries of the forty-eight sections, which a recent decree of the Legislative Assembly had most suicidally constituted *en permanence*, and thus rendered just so many available rallying points for perpetual commotion. The majority of the sections on that night, as M. Mortimer-Ternaux has shown by documentary evidence, elected no commissaries at all, and the remainder, with a few ardent revolutionary exceptions, were represented by a mere fraction of their members—knots of conspirators assembling in the dead hours of the night—a real electoral *coup d'état* against the constituent majority of the metropolis. The whole subsequent history of what has been called by popular French historians the ascendant period of the French Revolution is, in truth, the history of the rapid and lawless development of the lawlessly usurped power of these eighty-two commissaries of the sections, who installed themselves, in the night of the 9th and morning of the 10th of August, 1792, in a room of the Hôtel de Ville beside that of the real Council of the Commune. In the morning of the fatal 10th of August the legal Council of the Commune submitted to the usurped sway of

against us," said the younger Robespierre in the Jacobin Club, on the 29th September, 1792; "our sole hope lies in the citizens of Paris." "Don't trust too much to that ground of hope," Desfieux warned the same audience. "Even here in Paris it is only too certain that we should be beaten at every election made by secret voting." [The Jacobins, indeed, were themselves so sure of this, that they violently set aside the legal mode of taking the votes whenever they could bring their mob force to bear on the elections.]

these intrusive night-birds who had nestled so near them—so far as to send a message at their dictation to the Commandant of the National Guard, Mandat, who had taken the military measures his duty demanded for defence of the avenues to the Tuileries. He received orders to withdraw the cannon he had posted on the Pont Neuf and the quays, and to present himself in person, before the Council of the Commune. When he came, on reiterated summons from the legal authority which he supposed still existing, he found himself placed in the sinister presence of the intrusive commissaries, and by them was speedily thrust out to be massacred by their mob outside. As soon as these night-birds (some amongst them jail-birds) had put out of hand this preliminary piece of morning work, and got all they wanted of ostensible legal authority for crippling the legal force from the complaisant municipal council in the next room, they simply walked in and took their places—which, indeed, the latter (the legal Municipals) were already vacating. The usurping Commune of Paris, thus constituted, in contempt of law—law fresh from the mint of Revolution—are ‘damned to everlasting fame’ as the founders and inaugurators of the unparalleled *régime* branded by history as the Terror.

What manner of men were they who thus seized into their own hands the sovereign power of a great city and a great country? ‘When one runs through the list of these pretended Commissaries,’ says M. Mortimer-Ternaux, ‘what are the sort of names (such of them as were known at all) which meet our eyes? We find men of the worst and lowest description—“scribes of the kennel” as M. Michelet terms them, like L’huillier and Truchon, “*hommes de sac et de corde*,” such as Huguenin, the ex-clerk at the barriers, and Hébert, the ex-vendor of checks at the theatre doors—lazy and good-for-nothing workmen, like Rossignol, who became a not less *lâche* and good-for-nothing general—apostate priests, like Bernard and Xavier Audoin—Simon, the shoemaker, the future torturer and murderer of the royal orphan—Cailly, Lenfant, and Duffort, the future colleagues of Marat, Panis, and Sergent in the September *comité de surveillance*; the rest

totally unknown either to fame or infamy.' And these were the men who, in a night of fatal memory, held the destinies of France at their uncontrolled disposal!—who, and whose successors, held those destinies at their disposal for nearly two years, through their political chiefs in the National Convention and its committees.

Such having been the Effect of the night of the 9th of August, 1792, and such their titles to seize the whole powers of government in a great city and a great country, the question suggests itself in reviewing so strange an episode in civilised history: What sort of anarchy must have first crept over a nation's mind, before such an anarchy could, for a time, overspread a nation's life, and stiffen, by cement of daily bloodshed, into a terrific tyranny?

It is an eternal truth, and a truth eternally lost sight of, that connivance with evil draws subjection to evil after it. The Girondists had called the Anarchists in aid of their own ambition; and their too protracted connivance with excesses, consummated at last by regicide, struck them with moral impotence to stem the rising tide of Anarchy against themselves. Of the rank and file of the party which finally triumphed it is said, we think truly, by M. Dauban,<sup>1</sup> 'Jacobinism is not, in its original essence, a homicidal frenzy, an insatiable thirst for blood; it is not in its nature precisely malignant (*méchante*); it is much worse—it is *bête*. The most stupid of men are precisely of all men the most dangerous, because, independently of the evil they may intend to do, they do, without intending it, the evil others in the background have an interest of their own to set them doing.' And thus, between the *bêtise* of the popular masses and the unbridled passions and unscrupulous aims of their leaders, Mirabeau's prophetic words were verified, which must have seemed extravagant when they were uttered:—'Vous aurez des massacres—vous aurez des boucheries—vous n'aurez pas même l'exécration d'une guerre civile.'

There is not in the history of mankind a more instructive example than that which is afforded by the internecine

<sup>1</sup> *Paris en 1794 et en 1795*, &c. Introduction, p. xviii.

struggle between the Gironde and the Mountain during the first nine months of the National Convention, of the unequal chances and predestined issues of a conflict in which, while on the one hand there is a clear superiority of mental and even of physical power, there is on the other a not less clear superiority of concert and organisation, albeit concert in crime and organisation of anarchy. In the three successive national Legislatures of the French Revolution—the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, and the National Convention—the majorities might be said to be conservative—so far, at least, as sentiment and intention went—of the essential principles on which civilised society is founded. There was, indeed, a sad amount of presumptuous ignorance of the conditions of stability in a political system, foremost amongst which is that it shall not be attempted, in a country of old habits and traditions, to erect an entire polity *de novo*. There was an utter want of acquaintance with the art of conducting public business through parliamentary channels, an utter ignorance of parliamentary tactics or party discipline, a fatal want of consistent and effective leadership on the part of the men who made themselves the organs and mouthpieces of the majority, rather than of willingness to be led in the rank and file. But here was the worst consequence of the self-denying ordinance of the Constituent Assembly, re-adopted by the succeeding Legislatures, which disabled the leading members of the national representative body from becoming ministers, and therefore deprived that body of all responsible and steady guidance. In the first months of the National Convention, and under the recent impression of the anarchical outrages, of which the leading functionaries of the Commune were the agents, and the leaders of the Mountain in their own body the abettors, an energetic minister could have carried any measures conservative of social order which he should but have put in substantive shape and pressed as Cabinet questions. This was proved by the fact that the Conservative motions of individual members were invariably carried, but carried in no shape capable of practical execution. The Party of Order had as

many heads as Hydra, but no directing head. The consequence was, that the Party of Order made 'most admired disorder,' and the Party of Disorder kept perfect working order in its own ranks. Their bond of union was the conscious solidarity of crime, the sense of implication in guilt and danger of punishment, the instinctive feeling that nothing could ensure impunity for the past but perpetual recurrence to fresh outrages and fresh terrorism. They had on their side the insurgent Commune of Paris confronting the legal Executive; the Jacobin club confronting the National Convention; and the lowest Parisian populace, armed and finally subsidised at forty sous a day, to overawe the real public, whose sentiments from time to time found utterance, but failed to find means and instruments of effective action.

In the Girondin ministry, nominally reinstated in power after the 10th of August—

'the attribute of *weakness*,' says M. Mortimer-Ternaux, 'was represented by Garat, one of those men of letters, without moral stamina or consistency, who, thanks to a certain facility of pen or fluency of speech, sometimes play for a moment, at epochs of revolution, a part out of all proportion to their real importance. Whether they are poets, publicists, or orators, matters not much. In verse or prose they adore the divinity of the day, and prostrate themselves before the rising sun. They are never at a loss to find materials in their common-place book for dithyrambs or harangues to celebrate the triumph of the stronger party, and the proscription of their former friends and colleagues. The incense they can no longer offer to the minions of absolute monarchy they burn at the feet of the new idol, the People-King, and tune their lyres to celebrate the charms of the guillotine, just as they previously tuned them to celebrate the charms of Phillis and Chloris. Devoid of strong convictions, pliant to "pressure from without," submissive to all powers that be, which they eulogise by turns with the like *naïve* shamelessness, they are ready to embellish with all the tinsel of their eloquence the most execrable outrages, the most monstrous crimes. Such, in many respects, was the new Minister of Justice, Garat.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Garat afterwards became a count and senator under the First Empire, having been successively Minister of Justice and Minister of the Interior under the Convention. He became also, in his character of *bel esprit*, a



When Roland at length retreated before the rising storm from the Ministry of the Interior, Garat was made use of as an unobnoxious stop-gap to fill his place. Most fatally he filled it for his friends of the Girondin party, who put him there. After their fall, under the Jacobin insurrection of the 31st of May and 2nd of June, 1793 (just as the Throne had fallen under the insurrection connived at by the Gironde on the 10th of August, 1792), Garat was still complaisant enough to remain in office as the Jacobin stop-gap, as he had previously been put in office as that of the Girondins.

The system of secret police—of ‘observation’—or, in plain terms, espionage of all that was said, done, or written in the French metropolis—we scarcely need remind our readers, was no invention of the revolutionary era of 1789-92. So long back as the date of the royal ordonnance of 1667, by which the police of the city and vicinity of Paris was placed in charge of the lieutenant-general of that city, there was established under his authority not only a public but a secret police, represented by a larger or smaller number of agents, euphemistically entitled ‘observateurs.’ The functions of these ‘observers’ have varied under various régimes from that day to this, but have never gone out of use, least of all under the Second Empire. Under the old régime a host of spies was employed of all ranks; and the whole life and conversation of individuals were often subjected for years to the

member of the *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques*. It has been surmised that the moral and political science he had chiefly studied must have been that which had taught him to cultivate cowardice as prudence, baseness as moderation, and dissimulation as reserve. The daughter of the well-known barrister and political historian, John Adolphus, in her lively and entertaining *Recollections* of her father, makes the following mention of Garat in his later days (about 1820):—

‘A remarkable French acquaintance made by my father was Garat, who, as Minister of Justice in 1793, delivered the sentence of death to Louis XVI. He was a quiet, gentle-mannered old man. He and his daughter joined a dinner-party at our house, and were much pleased with the English, and greatly enjoyed London. It seemed like a dream to see a man who had been so prominent in the tragedy of that dreadful Revolution sitting at the table of so pure a Royalist as the author of the *Biographical Memoirs*, cheerful, simple, and agreeable in his manners and conversation, and recalling to the mind no trace of former days and dreadful deeds.’

secret inquisition of one or more of these ‘observateurs,’ of whom many were domestic servants. These observers were specially set to observe men of letters, priests, ‘dames galantes,’ ‘filles publiques,’ and French refugees in foreign countries. Under their supervision also were placed the ‘Nouvelles à la main,’ or manuscript scandalous chronicles, which were circulated in the capital, and throughout the provinces, at rates of subscription from six to nine and twelve francs monthly. Under Louis XV. the police busied itself in penetrating all the scandalous secrets of Paris life for the amusement of the jaded voluptuary on the throne. The systematic violation of the secrecy of letters was regarded as a natural right of the Government, and the discoveries made by these disgraceful methods were doubtless often turned to the purposes of private vengeance, ambitious intrigue, and arbitrary power, with its ever ready instrument of ‘lettres de cachet.’ These portentous warrants—sometimes of imprisonment which might be perpetual—were signed in blank, as a matter of course, by the monarch, and left to be filled up at discretion by his ministers, or his ministers’ lackeys, or those to whom his ministers, or his ministers’ lackeys, might give or sell them. More than 150,000 of these documents are said to have been issued under the sign manual of Louis XV., 14,000 even under that of the mild Louis XVI.<sup>1</sup> It need scarcely be asked in what school the Révolutionists learned their processes of arbitrary arrest and unlimited incarceration. They bettered the instruction indeed by massacre; but that was the only addition, unless in extended scale of operation, they could well make to the processes of lawless power.

The utter destruction of all that remained of the *prestige* of royalty—of ‘that divinity which doth hedge a king’—by the otherwise contemptible (but unchecked) rabble-march on the Tuileries of the 20th of June, and the not less contemptible (but unresisted) rabble-siege of the Tuileries of

<sup>1</sup> It must be observed, in order to render the above figures credible, first, that a *second* ‘lettre de cachet’ had to be issued to liberate prisoners *embastillés* by a first; secondly, that the larger proportion of these royal mandates were not issued for imprisonment in the Bastille, but for exile from Paris.

the 10th of August—was accompanied by an entire revolution in the police of Paris, as in the administration of France :—

‘The legal municipality,’ says Professor Schmidt, ‘was superseded by an insurgent Commune, which arrogated to itself all power, acknowledged no authority, and assumed into its hands the government of the whole of France. The police, the proper function of which was the maintenance of public order, the prevention or repression of crime, on a sudden itself became disorderly and criminal—passed in great part from the hands of the municipality into those of the sections, and from those of the sections into those of the clubs which domineered over them. During this monstrous metamorphosis it declared the city of Paris *en masse* in a state of suspicion, performed domiciliary visits in all directions, crammed the prisons with innocent victims, suborned and perpetrated the massacres of September, openly set at defiance the Legislative Assembly as afterwards the Convention, annulled the authority, co-ordinate with its own, of the Department, and paralysed the action of the ministerial government—the power of the executive Council of the State.’

Under such circumstances, secret police communications to the nominal Executive Power could have no more efficacy for the prevention of crime, or the preservation of order, than the impotent moralisings of a Greek tragic chorus. Accordingly, Roland, as Minister of the Interior and member of the Executive Council, gave up all hopes of doing anything with the police—which had, indeed, been wrenched from his hands—and set up as a counterpoise to the anarchical omnipotence of the Commune, clubs, and sections what he called a ‘Bureau d’esprit public,’ for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout France on political subjects. Such an idea was amiably characteristic of the Gironde, who never lost the illusion that murder and rapine, freed from the fear of law, could be restrained by words spoken or written. ‘Madame Roland,’ says Dumont, in his ‘Souvenirs sur Mirabeau,’ ‘was too fond of writing, and incited her husband also to scribbling without end. It was the ministry of political penmen. A single good journal would have served the Girondins better than did all the swarms of scribblers subsidised by the Minister of the Interior, under

the notion of enlightening the nation and forming public opinion.'

Public opinion, indeed, in Paris, as in the provinces—(all that deserved the name)—was already pre-enlisted on the side of Public Order. The problem was, to give legal organs and legal force to it; and that problem the Girondins never fairly grappled with or worked out.

When Garat, on the fall of Roland, suffered himself to be pitchforked into the Ministry of the Interior, he often, and with great justice, complained that the National Convention neither bestowed power, nor confidence, nor *agents* on that ministry; that it left, in fact, all practical power in the hands of the Commune, which had the usurped attribute of arbitrary arrests, and the armed force of the sections, at its disposal. 'All these exorbitant powers,' said Garat, in his conversations with the Girondins, 'were granted against kings; and why are they left in the hands of the Commune now that there are no kings? You leave the Executive Council, composed of your friends, powerless; and you leave the Commune, composed of your enemies, all-powerful. Make haste to organise a Government such as shall possess force and merit confidence.'

'But why,' Professor Schmidt asks, with not less justice, 'why did Garat, on this subject, confine himself to private conversations with one or other member of the Convention of his acquaintance? Why did he not make his well-founded complaints heard in the Convention itself? Why, we would add, had not the ministry the power of making itself heard there regularly? That arena was, most mischievously, left to 'independent members,' who have been described by a British minister as 'members there is no depending on.' Had even a minister with so little pluck and bottom as Garat possessed seat and voice as a ministerial leader in the Convention, instead of appearing before it only when he was summoned, or only on some special and instantly alarming emergency, is it possible he should have left to an independent member (Gensonné) to bring forward, unsupported, a motion for placing in the hands of the Exe-

cutive Council the power of calling out the armed force, which it did not possess, which the Commune did possess, and used—we all know how? Is it possible that even a minister like Garat should not have made a Cabinet question of such a motion?—a course in which he would have, most unquestionably, been backed by a majority in the Convention. As a substitute for the only effective constitutional remedy for the situation which would have been supplied by the presence of ministers in the House, Garat declared his opinion (as usual, without attempting to get it acted on) that the Executive Council had better be suppressed altogether, and the Convention take into its own hands, through its Committees, the execution of the laws and the disposal of the armed forces of the metropolis. The Girondins having then the majority in the Convention, and its Committees, might have got the start of Robespierre, who established his tyranny on precisely the same basis. The Gironde left to the Mountain, as represented by Robespierre, to propose later the transfer of the whole powers of administration to the afterwards too-famous Committees, on the very substantial ground that ‘a Government was needed of which all the parts should be in contact; and that there had hitherto existed between the Executive power and the Convention a barrier which prevented that unity of action which formed the essential force of a Government.’ From the date of that transfer, the seat of political initiative and executive action may be said to have been transferred from the anarchical absolutism of the Commune to the Terrorist absolutism of the Committee of Public Safety, wielded in effect by Robespierre.

We have seen that Revolutionary legislation had completely disabled the nominal holders of executive power in France, either for taking charge of public measures in Parliament, or for calling public force in aid of effective administrative action. They were neither in a position personally to press the passing of measures of public urgency, nor to secure the execution of such measures, even had they been passed. What was left them? A rôle un-

fortunately congenial to Garat's natural disposition—that of passive *observation* of the unchecked progress of anarchy towards tyranny. Garat organised what he called ‘a system of observation for the departments and for Paris’—a pale reproduction of the system of secret police of Louis XV.—with the important exception of the *Cabinet Noir* at the Post-office. *That* department of *espionage*, with all its persecuting and plundering opportunities, the Commune had taken good care to keep in its own hands.

Under these circumstances, Garat gave himself the sterile satisfaction of secretly organising a corp of ‘*Commissaires observateurs locaux du département de Paris.*’ The object was to keep the Home Minister, by daily reports, *au courant* of all that was said and done in Paris. Garat's corps of ‘*Commissaires observateurs*’ consisted of at least seven. Amongst the reports of these observers, published by Professor Schmidt, the most original in character, and in all respects the most deserving of notice, are those of Citizen Dutard, extending only over the short period from April 30 to June 25, 1793, a period including the last unequal struggles and final fall of the Gironde. Dutard had exercised the profession of an advocate at Bordeaux and Paris, and, it seems, had owed obligations to Garat's family. There is much good sense and evident good faith in Dutard's reports, and he seems to have done all that a humble friend could do to stir his patron to action. His reports afford ample confirmation to every other trustworthy contemporary authority that there was in Paris, as well as in the departments, an enormous preponderance of force, as well as of opinion, ready to array itself against the Jacobin populace-tyranny. But that force was without organisation and without leaders. Revolutionary legislation, which had let all the administrative powers of the State drop into the hands of the populace, had helped the Jacobins to both. The Jacobins, therefore, triumphed.

The worst firebrand of civil discord—the only one, indeed, which could have kindled anything like intestine war in France in the first years of a revolution which had thrown to the

popular masses the bait of material benefits partly real, partly illusory, from the overthrow of the old order of things—was the *religious* firebrand lighted by the Constituent Assembly in its civil constitution of the clergy, and hurled far and wide among the millions of adherents pure and simple to the Church (who had also, including the great body of the *curés*, been adherents of the Revolution), by the savage spirit of persecution with which the first mistaken measures of the first Assembly were followed up by the second, by the revolutionised Commune of Paris, and by the National Convention. Very vivid are the impressions communicated by Dutard's reports of the oppressive effects of the interdict attempted to be enforced by the Commune and the revolutionary committees of the sections on the popular religious fêtes and processions which had been customary in Paris from time immemorial. The Kings of France had always figured in the procession of the Fête-Dieu (Corpus Christi day), the greatest and most popularly-honoured annual solemnity of the Catholic Church in Paris. In 1791 this religious anniversary happened to fall on the days of Louis XVI.'s ill-starred flight to Varennes. The king's place in the procession was taken by the President of the National Assembly—at that time, by a curious freak of destiny, the Marquis Alexandre de Beauharnais.

'Who could have predicted at that time,' says M. Mortimer-Ternaux, 'to that simple member of the Assembly, separated from his colleagues in the procession only by an interval of a few paces (but whom that interval designated for the day as the representative of French royalty), that, sixty years later, his grandson should be invested with the imperial purple, and with sovereign power in France for himself and his heirs [?], by virtue of a constitution, the *ninth* in succession to that which the Constituent Assembly was then engaged in completing?'

'The Fête-Dieu is at hand,' Dutard writes to Garat on May 25, 1793—

Remember, that it was at this time last year Petion, the popular idol, was pelted by the *sans-culottes* of Arcis for having put forth an ordonnance that people on that day should be free to work, or not to

work, as they pleased. Remember that, at the same anniversary, the sans-culottes of Paris debated for some days whether they should not stone Manuel for having dared to print that they should be free to hang out tapestry from their windows or not.

It was on that occasion Camille Desmoulins addressed to his friend the Procureur of the Commune the ironical caution—  
 ‘Mind what you are about, friend Manuel ! *les rois sont mûrs*—  
*—le bon Dieu ne l’est pas encore !*’

The fête-day recurred, in 1793, just on the eve of the final Jacobin movement against the Gironde, begun on the 31st May and consummated on the 2nd June. The revolutionary municipals did their worst to prevent the usual processions and decorations. The Paris population generally, however, persevered, under difficulties, in honouring the day as heretofore. The processions, indeed, were shorn of all their official pride, pomp, and circumstance. The line of march was headed by no representative of the democratic supremacy of the moment. Only the priests led, and the people followed :

The countenances of the assistants plainly spoke their feelings. There was an involuntary contrast of things as they were with things as they had been—a sense of privation by the arbitrary abolition of the most splendid ceremony of the Church. ‘I observed also,’ adds Dutard, ‘regret at the loss of the accustomed profits which this and other fêtes produced to thousands of workpeople. The people of all grades and all ages were silent, shamed, depressed. Some had tears in their eyes. The priests and cortége seemed well pleased with the reception given them.’

What results most clearly from the personal observations of the most intelligent of Garat’s secret police, is the warning example against pushing political animosities and resentments to such a pitch as to preclude united action against worse enemies in a common cause. A trivial enough instance of this ever-recurring French foible is afforded in the following report of Dutard to Garat, 30th April, 1793 :—

Yesterday, in the Palais Égalité, a young man who, by his bearing [*par son moral*], seemed to me to be a *Brissotin* or an *aristocrat*, got into a quarrel with a Jacobin. The former had trod on the tail of the latter’s dog ; and for this cause a serious affair was on the point



of arising between them. The Jacobin had a long sword, the aristocrat none. The latter at first put a good face on the matter, but at last turned pale and apologised.

You will ask me how it could happen that a dozen Jacobins should have intimidated two or three hundred aristocrats. [It may be observed that Dutard's 'aristocrats,' at this epoch, like Fréron's '*jeunesse dorée*' at a later epoch, seem to include everybody with a hat and coat.] *It is because the former have a rallying-point, and the latter have none.* It is because the aristocrats are still divided amongst themselves. All alike are open-mouthed against the mass-crucers ['*les tueurs*']—some of the more reasonable wish to unite with the sound part of the Convention—but the majority resists. Their heads are still full of all the old quarrels—their tongues are still wagging against the Guadets, the Vergniauds, and so on.

Dutard's reports supply some curious and amusing details of the sort of pressure from without which carried the too famous law of the maximum—a law which pretended to fix maximum prices for the first necessities of life. Ducos had argued in the Convention with convincing force (to instructed minds) that if you insist on fixing a maximum price for grain, you must fix it for everything else. He showed that the cause of the high prices of necessities was the excessive issue of assignats—which, being inconvertible into specie, necessarily became depreciated.<sup>1</sup> To attempt to remedy this by fixing the price of corn and provisions was illusory; the only real remedy was reduction of the issues of paper. But the populace of Paris, and the patriotic women and girls of Versailles, thought otherwise; they invaded the Convention

<sup>1</sup> Another cause of high prices of agricultural produce, since the outbreaking of the Revolution, was the considerable decrease of agricultural production, owing to the successive sweeping measures of confiscation. The state and communal management of the confiscated landed property of the Church and the emigrants was so wretched, and their cultivation so crippled, that before the end of 1792 it was estimated that a twentieth part of the land previously under cultivation lay as good as waste. Those lands which came into the possession of petty holders without skill or capital thrived accordingly. The general derangement of the whole rural economy rendered it more and more difficult to supply from home sources the wants of Paris and the other great towns of France; and in 1793 and 1794 the frantic administration of the Terrorists (*testé* Gouverneur Morris) laid embargoes also on the American and other foreign commerce in French ports, which might to some extent have supplied the revolutionary deficiency of home production.

with all their charms on the 2nd May, 1793, and seemed to have formed the main body of the force which carried the maximum. 'The people,' says Dutard, 'has witnessed with satisfaction the sort of victory gained by the women of Versailles yesterday; but the Jacobins, for their part, do not mean to remain content with that victory.'

The Versaillaises evacuated the hall of the Convention about six o'clock, and traversed the length of the Château [of the Tuileries] as far as the *Grande Allée*. All the groups in the gardens dissolved in an instant—men, women, old, young, aristocrats, and Jacobins—it was who should run the fastest to see the Versaillaises pass. I was really quite ashamed to see people *comme il faut*, of all ages, of all ranks, scampering through the mud, and jumping over the puddles which had been formed by the rain that had fallen. And all to see a hundred or so of women walk in procession with a battered drum at their head.

On reflection I felt ashamed to let myself be left behind, and ran like the rest. A pretty Versaillaise, who had observed that I had something about me that looked like gaiety, seized hold of my arm, saying—'If you are not an aristocrat, you will come along with us.' The challenge was tempting; so I fell into the line of march, and accompanied them as far as the barrier. At the *Pont Tournant* [which formerly connected the Tuileries gardens with what is now the Place de la Concorde] we found the sides of the road crowded with men and women. I started the cry of *Vive la République* near a hundred times over (I play the fool pretty well when I set about it). But what was my surprise to find that the word struck a chill into all round me, and that none of these people—not even the blackguards of the street—echoed it!

Arriving at the Champs Élysées, we passed a public-house with an awning outside it. Under this awning about sixty persons had assembled for shelter from the rain. Of the sixty, forty at least had the air of aristocrats. At this point I amused myself by setting my sans-culottes by the ears with the *gens culottés*. These good people looked rather like dogs when, to provoke them, you crook your fingers in guise of claws. They half grinned, but never could be got to cry '*Vive la République!*'—'*Vivent les sans-culottes!*'—'*Vivent les gens de Versailles!*'

We halted at the barrier, all carrying branches of trees. I forgot to mention that a flag preceded us, bearing in large and legible characters the inscription—'We bring you a decree fixing the price of corn.' Here then we halted, and fell into each other's arms pro-

miscuously. I received a hundred compliments and invitations to come to Versailles, and for my own share kissed at least sixty citizenesses.

I returned in company with a baker's daughter, about sixteen years of age. She talked to me all the way of nothing but the sittings of the Jacobins. 'My papa goes to every sitting of the club almost, and mamma is much pleased when papa has other business, for then she goes instead. I think it very hard (*je suis très-privée*) that I mayn't too. Things can't go on this way very long—we will wait just a little longer—but if the *côté droit* [at that epoch Girondin] don't convert itself, it may get the worst' (*ça pourra bien aller mal pour lui*).

Sternly menaced for sweet sixteen! And the menace was too soon verified; and thus did Versailles send its States'-girls to bully the squeezable Convention—to press on them the reluctant passing of the *Law of the Maximum*—the Law of Famine, which, if it fed nothing else, daily fed the guil-  
lotine.

Let it be owned, that the direful depreciation of the assignats furnished too fair an excuse of the popular pressure for the maximum. But the effect of decreeing maximum paper prices for the first necessities of life was simply that those selfish *accapareurs*, the farmers and graziers, withheld their supplies of corn, cattle, and forage from Paris. They uncivically declined to supply money's worth for fixed prices in worthless paper. Thence the protracted scarcity, notwithstanding the most lavish municipal and State subsidies to provision Paris. It was a state of siege, self-inflicted, without besiegers. Thence the spectacle of those long-suffering *queues* at the bakers' and butchers' shops, which Paris has seen renewed so recently under German pressure from without. Thence the hungry readiness to follow the monomaniac Marat's murdering and plundering counsels; thence, from the unsatisfied rage of hunger, the thirst for blood. The successful demagogues of the day always made it an article of charge against their last precursors that they had conspired to starve Paris. And at every fresh *fournée* of victims, whether aristocrat or Jacobin, the Political Women always promised themselves that they should have cheap bread.

The precious regimen of *assignats*, tempered by a *maximum*, produced a state of things which drove the working class to desperation. The flight from Paris of a large proportion of the wealthier classes, who had been the most considerable employers of labour and purchasers of its products, completed their misery. Evidence on these points abounds in the secret police reports before us. A report of Dutard, 2nd May, 1793, gives the following instance:—

A sturdy locksmith, one of those blunt discourses who have a good deal of dry humour, said :—‘ I work in iron ; if anyone will prove to me that I can live on iron, I shall be satisfied ; but as it is, if the *gros bourgeois*, if the rich proprietor, refuses me *bread*, I shall say to him, “ B——, I don’t care a fig for your assignats—what I want is bread ; I give you iron, I give you my labour, on condition you give me, not assignats, but bread.” ’

Some nine months later—that is to say, in the thick of the Terror (February 1794)—we find the following passage in a report of another police ‘ observer.’ It must be admitted that these reports, in the strict sense of the word, may be termed ‘ trivial’—the materials for them are picked up for the most part in the public thoroughfares—but they are not the less illustrative of the sort of life-in-death of the dismal epoch before us :—

A group of workpeople, amongst whom were carvers and gilders, were complaining that they had been a long time out of work. ‘ How should we have work,’ said they, ‘ when all the rich, whether patriots or no, are clapped in prison, and the only workpeople now who can get a living are those employed by the army contractors?’ ‘ That won’t last long,’ replied another ; ‘ there is a commission to inspect the cases of those who have been unjustly imprisoned ; and as soon as they are released you will see they will find employment for the hands of the poor.’

The Paris workpeople had some five months to wait—till the fall of Robespierre—for the first partial realisation of their modest hopes for the good of trade by the liberation of rich customers from wholesale incarceration. Poor people ! they lived and died before the enlightened days of that new economic science which has demonstrated, with

by which Paris, in 1792-3, passively suffered itself to be disarmed, man by man, and house by house, was certainly and consciously inferior—not only in intellectual but in physical force—to the great body of the comparatively instructed and possessed classes, whom Danton, Robespierre, and the rest, set themselves systematically to lay prostrate under the heel of a Jacobinised proletariat.

The character of Danton he that runs may read, if he will read it in the original and authentic records of the man Danton's own words and deeds. Human nature has been said to have much of the beast in it, and some of the devil. It may be said of Danton's nature that it had more of the animal and less of the diabolical, while Robespierre's, if less of the former, had more of the latter. Danton had nothing of the atrabilious temperament or political fanaticism requisite to have made him a sincere zealot of proscription and massacre. He let loose both indeed deliberately over the length and breadth of France. But it was simply to preserve his populace-leadership in Paris. Populace-leadership in Paris meant prolonged enjoyment for Danton—first, of bribes from the Court to avert risings of the populace; secondly, of the lion's share of public plunder after their triumph.

The first appearances of Danton in Paris politics stamped the reckless and truthless demagogue. He was elected a member of the Council-General of the Commune in September 1790 by the section of the Théâtre Français. Five months later, in February 1791, he contrived to get himself elected into the Council-General of the Department—a

tude), soixante bataillons révolutionnaires; il y avait quatre-vingt-dix bataillons entièrement conservateurs. Le reste était partagé, et incapable d'avoir une action décisive. Les quatre-vingt-dix bataillons conservateurs étaient plus anciennement formés, mieux équipés, mieux armés que les révolutionnaires; ils étaient également nombreux, ils étaient mieux commandés et plus disciplinés. Seulement ces indignes citoyens ont l'habitude de s'en remettre à l'armée et à la police, qui sont chargées de se faire tuer pour l'ordre. Mais il y a des moments où la police est sur les dents, où l'armée ne comprend pas bien de quel côté est son devoir, ou si son devoir n'est pas de rester tranquille. A ces moments-là, le pavé de Paris est au premier occupant.' (*Rosset—Papiers posthumes recueillis et annotés, par Jules Amigues, Paris, 1871.*)

body instituted as a sort of Conservative Senate, to keep the democratic Commune in check. Here Danton found himself in a minority of one for the most part. On the 18th April of that year, Louis XVI., wishing apparently to ascertain by experiment whether he was, or was not, a prisoner in his own palace, set out *en carrosse* to pass a few days at St. Cloud, whereupon arose a furious *émeute*, and the royal party were forced back to the Tuileries, notwithstanding all the efforts of Bailly and Lafayette to coax the mob and clear the way.

On the 28th April, Danton denounced to his Section (that of the Théâtre Français) the conduct held by Lafayette and Bailly on the 18th. This denunciation was placarded by the Section all over Paris, and Danton's part in the matter was brought formally before the Department. The report (published for the first time by Professor Schmidt) of the sitting of the Council-General of that body on the subject demolishes the falsities and fanfaronnades which had found their way into history from the Paris journals of that day, prompted and inspired by Danton. Those journals<sup>1</sup> had asserted that

Lafayette and Bailly solicited the Department to proclaim martial law, and authorise firing on the people. BUT DANTON WAS THERE. He prostrated them at once [*il les a terrassés*]; he pulverised the demand with the thunders of his popular eloquence. He carried the rejection of the resolution for martial law. Lafayette left the room full of rage.

At the above-mentioned meeting of the Council-General of the Department a formal declaration was drawn up—first, that, on the 18th April, *two* sittings had been held of that body. At the first of those sittings, which was being held at the moment when the mob round the palace were putting their veto on the excursion of the king to St. Cloud, *M. Danton was not present*. [For the very sufficient reason that he *was* present at the Tuileries, and taking part with the mob, at the head of his battalion of the National Guard.] Secondly, that it was false that, at that sitting, any demand

<sup>1</sup> Camille Desmoulins, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*; Fréron's *Orateur du Peuple*, &c.

had been made on the part of the Mayor of Paris (Bailly) or the Commandant-General of the National Guard (Lafayette) to be authorised by proclamation of martial law to fire on the people. Thirdly, that the second sitting had taken place after the king had given up his intended excursion. At that sitting, at which M. Danton was present with other members, nobody had asked for any order or authority to fire on the people; and as the assemblage had by that time dispersed, there remained no motive for any such application. Danton made a lame explanation, and the matter dropped.

Danton has been described as a *Mirabeau en moins grand et en plus laid*. But Mirabeau had the genuine aristocratic virtue of abhorring, in his heart, revolutionary disorder and violence, though he lent his tongue, at some critical moments, to promote or palliate them. Mirabeau's main efforts went to bridle Revolution before it should irrecoverably convulse France—Danton's to unbridle Revolution till it should elevate and enrich Danton. That effected, he was the sort of revolutionary lion that would willingly have lain down with the lamb. Land and beeves—*domus et placens uxor* (the second)—as well as a certain self-indulgent good-nature in the man himself, and a clear and acute perception of the hollowness of the ochlocratic bubble he had been blowing—were rapidly converting Danton, in his last days, into something as like an easy-going Conservative country gentleman as anyone in France could well be in *An II.* of the Republic one and indivisible. But he reckoned without his host. The wakeful and vindictive malice of Robespierre had been roused by the lenient velleities and the ill-concealed contempt of Danton for the *âneries* of the great Jacobin Incorruptible. And whom Robespierre spited he never failed to strike down—till his last fatal failure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A shrewd observer, Gouverneur Morris, has left the following observations on the fall of Danton, which occurred during his stay in France. They read curiously at the present day from their at least partial variance with the revolutionary mythology of which eminent pens have made Danton the hero. But they transmit impressions which must be supposed to have been current in France

That a worthless, possessionless, brainless minority—Mr. Bright's true 'residuum'—could ride roughshod over all that had sense or substance in Paris and throughout France, during the eighteen months or two years of the Terror, was owing, as we have already indicated, simply and solely to organisation on one side, want of organisation and isolation on the other. The scoundrels who had scent of blood and plunder were banded, and, fatally for France, badged with the insignia of municipal office; the honest working men and substantial citizens were scattered unofficial units. They had lost the protection of the old royal government, and did not know (till they came to feel) all that was involved in the experiment of cutting an old kingdom to pieces in order to stew it into a new Republic.

'There is not the slightest doubt,' says M. Dauban, 'that if the citizens of Paris who were then under arms [on June 2, 1793, which completed the fall of the Gironde] had been informed of the courageous stand which was being made for hours in the Convention by Lanjuinais, Isnard, and others against the conspiracy, the day of the 2nd June would have had a very different termination. Blood would have flowed, doubtless—but how much blood would have been spared!—how much shame would have been spared to the French name—nay, to human nature itself!'

The superior order of the Paris workpeople, as well as the *bourgeoisie*, belonged, and felt they belonged, to the

at the time Morris wrote them down for the information of his official chief, Edmund Randolph:—

'Danton always believed, and what is worse as to himself at least, always maintained, that a popular system of government for this country [France] was absurd; that the people were too ignorant, too inconstant, and too corrupt to support a legal administration; that, habituated to obey, they required a master; and that, even had they been educated in the principles of freedom and joined to the energy of sentiment the force of habit, yet, like ancient Rome, they had reached the period in which Cato was a madman and Cæsar a necessary evil. His conduct was in perfect unison with those principles when he acted; but he was too voluptuous for his ambition, too indolent to acquire supreme power. Moreover, his object seems rather to have been great wealth than great fame. He has fallen at the feet of Robespierre.'—*Life and Writings of Gouverneur Morris*, by Jared Sparks, vol. i. p. 42.



classes interested in preventing public confusion. The reports, already cited, of the police 'observer' Dutard give some curious instances of the feelings prevailing amongst those classes just on the eve of the decisive Jacobin triumph over the Gironde—a triumph which nothing prevented from being decided the other way, but the sad fact that the friends of Order were isolated, and its foes combined; that the party still in nominal possession of power—the Gironde—had no conception of a practical line of action, or no nerve to strike into it; while the party in pursuit of power, *per fas aut nefas*, had at least those faculties for its attainment and remorseless exercise.

'Yesterday,' writes Dutard [May 28, 1793], 'I was at the Montagne Ste. Geneviève, at a bookbinder's—a very honest and very industrious man. He had formerly been of the Jacobin party himself—that is to say, he loved above all things liberty and the Revolution. I have often had conversations with him before, but I never found him so reasonable as I did yesterday. *I ought to observe that work is beginning to fail him*—he has been struck by the current rumours and newspaper announcements that the faction would *level all conditions*. This honest man is not rich, but he has a modest apartment of his own, comfortably furnished—his workshop and an *avant-boutique* which contains his merchandise. He has two little children, and to save the expense of servants, he does his cooking himself since his wife is dead. He possesses *force assignats*, and perhaps some *louis*. He spoke to me yesterday pretty much in the following terms—"M. Didot is richer than I, but if they would give me his fortune to-morrow I would not take it; and if, on the other hand, they proposed to take it away from him to give it to some one else who had nothing, I should oppose that too, because I feel that M. Didot owes his fortune to his labour, to his industry, economy, &c. Let those who have nothing do as M. Didot has done—as I have done, though I have little—let him work to get something. Is it not scandalous that they want to substitute for the bourgeois, avocats, &c., all the common workpeople employed on the church of Ste. Geneviève? Is it by people of that sort they mean us to be governed in future?"

'Another true sans-culotte with whom I supped yesterday, near the Cour St. Martin, who had nothing but his daily labour to live upon, held pretty much the same style of reasoning. His wife, whose ruling passion is to *lie soft*, and put as many as four mattresses on her bed, said to me—"Ma foi! they say 'hat, to be a true sans-culotte one

should lie upon straw. At that rate I never shall be a true sans-culotte, for I love my bed hugely. Let others keep what they have—I mean, for one, to keep the little I have. I should like to see a stinkard [*un puant*] come and ask me to part with it! *Tiens*, they have combed off our small lice, and clapped big ones on instead, which bite much harder. The former were plump, comfortable, and kept quiet; these they now give us are meagre, eager, and would gnaw the devil to the bone. *Par exemple*, everything is grown too dear; it is no longer possible for the poor to live.” I wish you could have heard how this good lady tackled a sans-culotte commissary, who came to demand an extraordinary contribution “*Veux-tu me. . . . le camp?*—if I take the broomstick to you I’ll show you the difference. You’re a good one to come here asking money! Where did *you* study law—under a cabbage-leaf eaten bare by the caterpillars?” “Ah, ah!” cried the husband, laughing fit to split himself, “so the Père Duchesne is learning to *whistle* in prison!”’

Unluckily, the Girondin Committee of Twelve, who had plucked up spirit enough to put Hébert and Dobsent in prison, could not contrive to keep them there, under the timorous and time-serving ministry of Garat. It may be sadly feared that our friend the sans-culotte and his wife who liked so much to *lie soft*, found their next lodging at the Conciergerie for *lèse-Jacobinisme*, after the 2nd June had finally decided that the *puants* were uppermost, and should thenceforth lay all well-doing and well-to-do citizens under contribution to pay them forty sous a day for keeping them in daily terror.

The following passage affords additional illustration of the description of persons from amongst whom the *tourbe révolutionnaire* were chiefly recruited:—

Among the *classe enragée* there exists a sort of men who have no kind of prudence in the conduct of their own affairs. When they have 50 livres, they spend 50 livres; when they have only 5, they spend only 5. So that, spending habitually pretty much all they have, they save nothing—they accumulate nothing. Since the Revolution this class has suffered greatly, and it is this class which fills the galleries of the popular societies, makes motions, collects groups, &c. At this day, what is the situation of these people? They have nothing—they have divested themselves by degrees of every article of furniture which flattered them with the notion of *some* fortune, of

some possession. With what chance of a favourable or patient audience can you now propose to give these people *laws*? The staid and orderly man—the *modéré*, in a word—seems to them an oppressor. For they know well that, in any settled state of things, the man in decent circumstances, decently dressed, whose wife has gold éarrings, a watch, a silver key-ring, a showy necklace—that all these individuals will enjoy a position of social superiority over those who are reduced to a state of destitution. Many of these people are in debt to their baker, their butcher, their wine-dealer—nobody any longer will give them credit. They have wives they are tired of; children who are crying for bread while their father is at the Jacobin club or the Tuileries.

There is the true morbid anatomy of Revolution. The Desperate, at such epochs, soon shove aside, soon polish off (if the phrase be permitted), the earlier easy-going Revolutionists who have aught to lose:—

‘These political *raisonneurs*,’ writes Dutard, ‘these habitual haranguers at the Café Caveau, whenever they come my way, I pull them down from their high horse, by saying, “Where’s your sabre? You have not got one? Well, then, hold your tongue!” Yesterday a *petit-maitre* was saying, “They won’t take away my arms, for I never had any.” “Don’t boast of that,” said I; “there are forty thousand folks like you in Paris might say the same thing, and it does the good town of Paris little honour.”’

The suburban auxiliaries of the *tourbe révolutionnaire* about that epoch are ominously described by the same observer as follows:—

All the rabble in the environs run up to Paris at the first beat of the drum, in hopes of doing a lucrative stroke of business in one way or other. I have seen, within these few days, swarms of people attracted by the scent of game to Paris from Versailles, Neuilly, St. Germain-en-Laye, &c.

Soon after the decisive 2nd June, Dutard writes:—

I called at the shop of a *marchand de vin*, where I stayed half an hour. His wife, whom I have always known as a *patriote enragée*, was declaiming against the Revolutionary Committee. The arbitrary disarmings, arrests, &c., have considerably disgusted her. Her husband besides finds himself taken for an aristocrat. ‘*C’est une infamie!*’

On the 8th June Dutard writes as follows:—

In one of the groups of the Palais-Égalité a fellow in the uniform of the National Guard, but with his hair cut short round his head (which led to a surmise of other recent discipline), audacious in bearing, of visage pale and haggard, eyes sparkling with the fires of discord, sabre at side, and pair of pistols in belt, was declaiming vehemently on the anticipated arrival of ten thousand Bordelais, said to be on their march to Paris to claim their arrested deputies [the Girondins]. '*Ils n'en sauteront pas moins le pas,*' exclaimed this *spadassin*. 'I, too, am a Bordelais, and it is by these Bordelais themselves they will be escorted to the scaffold.' [The sinister prediction proved only too true: the provincial *fédérés* invited to Paris to protect the Legislature were speedily Jacobinised by the clubs and committees organised to oppress it.] 'Yes,' proceeded this worthy, recurring to the September massacres, 'all my concern is that they did not last longer. But *ça recommencera*—only wait some fifteen days or so.' The monster's language was visibly repudiated by those who heard it. But their tongues remained mute. After that, don't tell me *fear* is not the ready accomplice of every ruffian who would deprive his country of its liberty. Don't tell me that a people thus sheepish is not ever on the verge of losing that liberty.

June 13:—

The wife of a perruquier of my acquaintance, a woman of some wit and amiability, said to me—'Servants are vile creatures! I never hated them so as since this revolution. They come here daily tattling, and telling all sorts of tales of their masters. I have known some of them who had received benefits from those very masters, some who were receiving them still. It is all one—nothing stops their tongues . . .'

Two or three priests were returning from a sad office. The first of them happened to knock with his silver cross against a porter carrying a load,—'*Eh bien, toi ?—where art thou coming to with thy cross !*' '*Chut !*' said his comrade, '*c'est le bon Dieu !*' '*Bah !*' was the rejoinder, '*le bon Dieu ! Il n'y a plus de bon Dieu !*' '*On parle de Dieu,*' said a woman, '*mais Dieu est de l'aristocratie !*'

In the sitting of the Convention of August 25, 1793, a deputation of teachers and school-children was admitted to the bar. One of the latter acted as spokesman. This precocious protapostle of secular education demanded for himself and his fellows that they should be preached to no longer

in the name of a *soi-disant Dieu*, but should receive instruction in the principles of equality, the constitution of 1793, and the Rights of Man. The demand was graciously received, and promptly acted on. It was not only decreed that the Constitution should be taught in the schools (a Constitution, by the way, the coming of which into actual operation had been adjourned by the same authority *sine die*, or so long as 'revolutionary government' should continue to be deemed necessary), but the memory of school-children was loaded with the principal productions of the patriotic eloquence of the time.<sup>1</sup>

'C'est le peuple bête qu'on remarque partout,' says the same police observer.

Now that they see things are not going as they had imagined, their self-love is strangely wounded, their ambition desperate. For it is to be remarked that every single individual amongst the people, since the Revolution, has, according to his condition, constructed for himself his own little *château en Espagne*. What a contrast to what they looked for before, when they now look behind them! They seem to say to you—'We had been promised such great things, we were all to be happy—AND WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN, WERE IT NOT FOR THE TRAITORS. I should have acquired independence. I should have acquired perhaps fortune: and instead of that, I have run through the little I had. What shall I do to get it back?' &c.

Take the following darker development of what we may term Disappointed Revolutionism:—

'These executions,' says Dutard, with frightful coolness, 'serve to CALM the resentment of the people for the ills they experience. It is there they wreak their vengeance for all they have themselves suffered. The wife who has lost her husband, the father who has lost his son, the tradesman who has lost his trade, the workman who pays so dear for everything that his wages are reduced almost to nothing—can only be brought to bear patiently the ills they experience by the sight of human beings more unhappy even than themselves, and in whom they have been taught to believe they see their enemies.'

The Political Women, above all—the terror of the *weaker sex* in the galleries of the Convention and the Jacobin Club—

<sup>1</sup> Dauban, vol. i. p. 350.

made their shrill voices heard (many of them, doubtless, had children at home crying in vain for bread) in demand for more and more convictions and executions, in delight at every new *fournée* of their former favourites sent to the guillotine.

‘The great art of demagogues in all ages,’ observes M. Dauban, ‘is to divert the multitude from the sense of its own privations by exciting its jealousies and resentments.’ Thus it won’t do to say to it that the scarcity it suffers proceeds from the insufficiency of the harvest—from the excessive drought, or excessive humidity—from some natural cause, in short. The suffering people would not rest content with any such simple explanations. It suffers; therefore it is strongly disposed to distrust or detest all whom it supposes more at ease, or less badly off than itself. It is exasperated; therefore, like the angry child, it must needs find something to break in pieces. The demagogues eagerly compete to furnish it some object on which its fury may wreak itself, and even, in their precipitation to court its favour, are ready to offer up one another to its vengeance.’

‘Near the Champs Élysées,’ says one of the Police Reports before us [March 25, 1794], ‘a journal was being read in which mention was made of Chaumette [then under arrest, who had been one of the most prominent ringleaders of the Commune]. Almost all the women who stopped to listen said—“Oh, as for him, I shall go to see him guillotined; he is a rascal, who, with all his fine speeches, wanted to starve Paris.”’

‘Hébert,’ says M. Dauban, ‘had urged the execution of the Girondins, the execution of the queen, by publishing in his *Père Duchesne*, “Bread has been found in the sewers; meat has been thrown in the river; the conspirators and their abettors seek to starve the people. Their death will be followed by the return of plenty and prosperity.”’ The very same language was held in turn against Hébert himself—it is the only language that can be held with any effect to a famished and ignorant democracy.

‘The report has been current,’ says another of the police ‘observers’ before us, ‘that a commissary of police had found in Hébert’s house nearly a hundred pounds of salt pork, which, in spite of the remonstrances of the *Père Duchesne*, he had caused to be sold to the people, at the rate of 15 sous the pound, at the house door. . . .

‘The hawkers were crying in one of the suburbs the arrest of the

Père Duchesne. "He, too, is a traitor, then," said some sans-culottes, male and female; "*allons vite!*—let him be led to the guillotine. *Ah, les coquins! ah, les scélérats!*" they exclaimed, "let them be brought out—let them perish. It has been rightly said," they added, "that it is only Saint Guillotine can save us."

'In the Marché du Faubourg Antoine a fruit-woman distributed 6,200 eggs. There was a legion of women marketing, each of whom got some. No untoward incident happened, though there was no guard on duty, and the citoyennes made the remark that "since the Père Duchesne smokes his pipe no longer, market-women fall out less among themselves—they don't . . . fisticuffs at each other, as they did a week or so back."

'It was reported to-day [March 19, 1794] that more than 50 cartloads of butter and eggs had come in to provision Paris. "See," said a good woman, "since these rogues have been taken up, provisions abound. *Oh! pour le coup, nous pouvons dire que cela va.* Would it not be as well," added this Political Woman, "to make a clean sweep of the members of the Commune altogether; since there is reason to believe that they are all implicated more or less?" "Oh, certainly," said a citizen, "it would be well to put them all under arrest *provisionally.* . . ."

'In all the groups in the National Gardens, nothing was talked of but *provisions*, and the scarcity of provisions was exclusively ascribed to Hébert and his clique.'

The 'observer' Pourvoyeur writes as follows on February 19, 1794:—

A citizen in a group, this evening, said, 'It was not just that the restaurateurs should be suffered, notwithstanding the dearth of meat, to have half an ox, a calf, or a sheep in their larders, while fathers of families could get nothing to put in the pot for their sick wives at home.' This citizen demanded that no restaurateur should be suffered to have more meat by him than any other man. 'If he wants to give his customers something to eat, let him give them beans or potatoes. Plenty of honest citizens at this time are obliged to put up with such Lenten entertainment.'

Bacon writes on February 22:—

A fruit-woman at the Porte St. Denis, who was detected in the possession of some eggs and some pounds of butter, occasioned a concourse of women, who were on the point of strangling her as an *accapareuse*.

The section of the 'Indivisibilité' sent deputations this evening to the popular societies to announce to them that there were subterranean passages at the Hôtel de la Force, through which were driven live oxen, calves, sheep, &c., for the supply of the prisoners. Similar statements were made at the section of the 'Droits de l'Homme' respecting the prison of the Carmes. 'That's the way we are made game of,' said some women near me; 'they give meat to the rich prisoners, and to us *pauvres diables* they give nothing at all. What do we want with all these aristocrats in the prisons? These wretches, who starve Paris, ought they not to have been brought to the guillotine by this time?'<sup>1</sup>

No one could possibly grudge the guillotine to the Chabots, Chaumettes, and Héberts. But the honest artisans and workpeople of Paris, as we have already partly seen, did grudge to the guillotine the throats of their innocent and opulent employers and customers. Bérard, one of the police 'observers,' at present under our review, honestly reports as follows to his official employers (February 22, 1794):—

<sup>1</sup> History, it is said, never repeats itself. Does it not? Compare the passages above cited with the following, which we translate from the useful little reprint entitled *Les Clubs Rouges*, of the *Journal des Débats*' reports of the sittings of the popular societies in Paris, during the German siege of 1870-71:—

'DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF THE RUE CADET, 25TH NOV. 1870.—The citizen Wallach denounced the luxury of certain members of the clergy, while the people of the poorer quarters are dying of hunger. There are individuals who gorge themselves, while others want bare necessities. "Some of these, I know," said the speaker, "have four dishes of meat at their dinner." [*Marks of astonishment and unbelief.*] "Yes, I have seen, this very day, one of those guttlers singly swallow three dishes." [*Name the guttler!*] The orator next denounced the *accapareurs*, who have walled up their cellars after having filled them with hams by the million, and *comestibles* of all sorts. [*Cries of indignation—Il faut faire des perquisitions!*']

'CLUB OF THE MARSEILLAISE, LA VILLETTE, 11TH JAN. 1871.—A citizen, name unknown, claiming to be a member of the National Guard, spoke as follows:—"They have closed the Jardin des Plantes; and do you know why? Because they have been selling the elephants, bears, and other rare animals, for their weight in gold to the restaurateurs of the Palais-Royal, to feed the stock-jobbers and food-monopolists who speculate on the misery of the people. We—the *nécessiteux*, as they insultingly call us—what can we do with our 30 sous a day, when a bushel of potatoes costs 30 francs, and a stalk of celery 2 francs?" Another citizen said he knows a restaurant frequented by the employés of the Bank, where, only last week, they consumed two cows and a calf, while the ambulance opposite was in want of fresh meat. [*Violent murmurs.*']



It is the observer's duty to state the feelings and opinions of the people about the arrests. The people applauded so long as the arrests were confined to suspected persons and rich 'egoists ;' but now that merchants who provided the means of subsistence for numbers of workpeople—now that fathers of families become the victims of ill-humour, personal animosity, and pretended patriotism—the people which feels that it is systematically sought to deprive it of those who enabled it to subsist, murmurs loudly against the violation of all republican laws and principles. 'What has become,' asks one, 'of that Commission which was to liberate from imprisonment those who are detained unjustly?' 'Don't you see,' replied another, 'that it was only to pacify and delude us that it was made believe that some such commission was about to be named? If it existed, we should see who are those it releases from prison ; but, on the contrary, ever since the day it was announced, we see a hundred and fifty or two hundred individuals arrested daily.' 'Poor people,' exclaimed a third, 'it is only to trick and tease you that they are always making believe they are about to resort to milder measures. It is only to tear you more completely to pieces. What they want is civil war ; and we shall have it. No meat, no vegetables, no tradespeople, no rich, to feed or employ the poor !'

Latour-Lamontagne reports (February 23, 1794) :—

From all points of the Republic nothing is heard but complaints of the arrest of the most sincere patriots. No citizen who employed his fortune in the relief of the people, or his talents in their instruction, ever long escapes the inquisitorial researches of these new despots, who do not choose to permit the people to be relieved or instructed. If the Convention [poor Convention ! in the fell grip of Robespierre and his Committee of Public Safety] does not make haste to detect and frustrate their criminal manœuvres, one sole resource—one sole consolation—is left to the man of good will, the man who is really penetrated with the love of his country. That resource is to seek a glorious death from the Austrian sword on the frontier, rather than endure the chains forging for us at home.

Moncey reports (February 24, 1794) :—

In the Café Hottau, on the Terrasse des Feuillants, many citizens were talking of the Revolutionary Committees of Paris—saying that the *intrigants*, who have been named members of those Committees, do incredible mischief by molesting and arresting better patriots than themselves. 'The Revolutionary Committee of the section of the

Montagne,' observed a citizen, 'is one of those which ought to be purged; for I know three individuals in that Committee who are at the bottom of all the vexations practised by it, and who have continually caused good citizens to be imprisoned from private spite rather than to serve the public cause.' 'What are the names of those three members of the Committee of whom you speak?' asked a citizen. 'Their names,' he said, 'are Degoust, *coiffeur*, Forté, and Joubert; and I expect, if their conduct were closely examined, plenty of things would come out against them. As these three persons have plenty of words at command, and the other members of the Committee are good easy folks, they are always sure of carrying a majority with them.' 'These are the sort of people,' said my indignant citizen, 'who should be denounced at the bar of the Convention, for the liberty and honour of good citizens are too precious to leave at the mercy of men of that description.'

Le Breton reports (March 1, 1794):—

Yesterday, on the Place de la Révolution, I came upon a pretty considerable group of men and women, compassionating the fate of two individuals about to be guillotined, and I heard them say, 'Oh, my God! when shall we be tired of all this bloodshed?' Another answered, 'When we shall have no more criminals.' A third struck in, 'The death of a man is no great matter.' Another rejoined, 'If people are to be guillotined for their thoughts, what multitudes must be caused to perish!' Lastly, some one said, 'Don't let us talk so loud. We may be overheard and nabbed' (*pincés*).

Pourvoyeur reports (March 2, 1794):—

This afternoon, on the Place de la Révolution, while a number of persons were being guillotined, a citoyenne exclaimed '*Quelle horreur!*' Several citizens who heard her, took the citoyenne to task for her exclamation. 'What do you mean by such words? Are you sorry conspirators should be punished?' 'No,' she replied, 'but I meant to say how surprising it is that, so long as all this guillotining has been going on, *cela ne corrigeât pas les autres*.'

The people observed, on seeing some peasants mount the scaffold, 'How is it these *scélérats* have let themselves be corrupted? If they were rich or noble, one would not be surprised they should be counter-revolutionists, but in this class one expects to find good patriots. The law is just,' they said, 'it strikes the rich and poor without distinction.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Two-thirds of the victims,' says Von Sybel, in his *History of the Revolution-Time*, 'sent by the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal to the scaffold, between the 22nd Prairial and the 9th Thermidor, were peasants.'

This *Pourvoyeur*, observes M. Dauban, might well be called *Purveyor* to the guillotine. 'The rich require a scarecrow,' he says—the guillotine. Elsewhere, 'People are asking each other, How many have been guillotined to-day?' The work, they say, must go on quicker. 'Faudrait que cela aille plus vite que cela.' In another place, 'The people say one guillotine is not enough for Paris; there ought to be at least four.'

For the credit of humanity—even in the grade of paid police spies—most of these 'observateurs,' beginning with our friend Dutard, are of a less sanguine complexion. 'One or two of these observers,' says M. Dauban, 'are Jacobins, almost all are *modérés*.' Bérard describes courageously the prevailing public distress, which he does not hesitate to ascribe to a bad public policy. Latour-Lamontagne (a man of letters this one, and favourite of the Muses, author of a piece entitled '*Le Montagnard à Bordeaux, scènes patriotiques en vers libres*') declares himself against the Hébertists and Terrorists, against the multiplied executions inflicted on persons of all ages and both sexes. His tone contrasts strongly with that of *Pourvoyeur*. Bérard is, in like manner, a *modéré*, who blames the increasing frequency of executions. Perrière much affects the moralising style, lays himself out

'It happened sometimes that in villages composed, say, of a dozen households, all the heads of those households belonged to the *Comité Révolutionnaire* of the place, and set themselves to exercise a jealous surveillance over each other. The greater number of them valued their new position, first for the pay attached to it, but secondly and specially for the opportunities it afforded of crushing every one against whom they happened to have a grudge—the hated relation, the troublesome neighbour, the importunate creditor or trade rival. In this way the Terror, which at first directed its blows only against nobles, clergy, and rich *bourgeois*, now made them felt far and wide amongst the lower classes. A good third of French territory had changed hands in the great confiscations, and the overthrow of all old hereditary rights and customs had extensively excited the passions of envy and covetousness in the hearts of the peasantry. The new possessors of the soil, who had first been greeted by the ruling party with acclamations, very soon found themselves looked at askance from all sides. The Government viewed them as having become land-owners on too large a scale, the poorer peasantry drew unfavourable comparisons between them and the old proprietors. None of them could well fail to have private enviers or political enemies. Hence it happened that, during the last months of the Terror, the *glaiive de la loi* chiefly descended upon the necks of the new class of peasant proprietors.'

for piquant anecdotage and vivacity. We may add, after reading more of his Reports than deserved reading, that he is a thoroughly mean creature, who, with all his moral essaying, takes kindly to the task of delator of the vague crimes that sent myriads to the scaffold at the dismal epoch before us.

Let us now place on the scene, for a single instant, a model juror of the Revolutionary tribunal and his '*chaire épouse*'—such was this worthy's epistolary orthography in addressing his probably not worser half. Trinchard, a joiner, who sat as juror for eighteen francs a day in that court of infamy, 'seems,' says M. Dauban, 'to have regarded all the accused with that sort of curiosity, pure and simple, which attracted the *prolétaires* of Imperial Rome to the Coliseum on the days when the Christians were to be thrown to the wild beasts.' It never seems to have entered into Juror Trinchard's head that persons *accused* could be *acquitted*; and he invited his friends, before the trial, to come and see them condemned. Citizen Trinchard was desirous to treat his '*chaire épouse*' to the spectacle of a number of persons of distinction to be sentenced on a particular day. Twenty-one of the ex-members of the Parliaments of Toulouse and Paris—Thouret, Déprémenil, Lechapelier, Lamoignon de Malesherbes *and his whole family*, were to be brought in one day before this illiterate and insensible brute and his colleagues. Trinchard writes as follows, proposing the party of pleasure to his '*chaire épouse*:'<sup>1</sup>—

Si tu nest pas toute seulle, et que le compaignon soit a travailier tu peus ma chaire amie venir voir juger 24 mesieurs tous si deven président ou conselies au parlement de Paris et de Toulouse. Je t'ainvite a prendre quelque choge aven de venir parcheque nous naurons pas fini de 3 hurres.

Je tembrasse ma chaire amie et épouse.

Ton mari,

TRINCHARD.

Never, surely, were Tragedy and Farce brought into such shocking contact—*flebile ludibrium*! On the one hand, all

<sup>1</sup> *Archives de l'Empire*, carton W. 500.

that was venerable and illustrious in the old age of Malesherbes, all that was interesting in youth, sex, and innocence in two generations of his descendants: on the other, this civic brute Trinchard and his '*chaire épouse*,' whom he invites, 'if so disposed' (to borrow Mrs. Gamp's phrase), to see '*ces mesieurs*,' and he might have added '*ces dames*,' tried for a crime sufficient to secure condemnation—their moral and social superiority to their accusers and judges; and whom he counsels to *take lunch* before she comes to witness her spouse's more than ordinarily distinguished day's tale of murders.

How the decemvirs of devastation and massacre, judicial and extra-judicial, were lodged, our readers may be amused to learn from the following description given by M. Dauban, from a writing of the period, of the *salons* in the Tuileries appropriated to the sittings of the *Comité de Salut Public*:—

All the corridors which led to the place of sitting of the Committee were sombre, *tristes*, and strongly contrasted with their saloons themselves. Those who could penetrate so far were astonished and dazzled by the change of scene. The floors were decked with the most splendid carpets from the looms of the Gobelins, marbles and gilt bronzes were reflected from every side in magnificent mirrors, sumptuous clocks and glittering girandoles adorned the mantelpieces. It was here that delegates from revolutionary committees came to communicate information and receive orders—it was here that members of the Convention came humbly to solicit missions in the departments. The national representation was entirely absorbed in the Committee. The Convention had become a place merely for the formal proclamation of public measures. The twin Committee, '*de Sécurité Générale*,' however, attracted the greatest crowd of suppliants. It was continually besieged by families in tears, and repulsed them with brutal ferocity. Nothing was done there without having first taken the orders of the *Comité de Salut Public*.

That the strength of Jacobinism mainly resided in the disunion, and thence weakness, of its opponents—in the freemasonry of crime, which combined its ringleaders in a mutual assurance of impunity—was finally made evident by the marvellous ease with which the populace-power was put down in Paris, and throughout France, the moment the split

amongst its leaders, which produced the 9th Thermidor, left Jacobinism acephalous, as previous distracts and divisions had left Girondism and Royalism. 'From the date of the 11th Thermidor' (July 29, 1794), writes Prud'homme, 'the word "Terror" is proscribed; the revolutionary tribunals employ the last days which remain to them in violent and vain efforts at resistance. Numbers of Montagnards are arrested. Fréron musters against them the young men of Paris, who received the nickname of *jeunesse dorée*, and wore, by way of uniform, the distinctive badge of black collars.'

The account which reads most like truth of this *jeunesse dorée* is the following, given long back by Lacretelle, the historian,<sup>1</sup> who took up arms (*i.e.*, a walking-stick) in its ranks:—

At that epoch, it was necessary to combine another sort of combats, not indeed military, but at least athletic, with those of the press and tribune. The Thermidorian party—finding themselves hard pressed by Billaud-Varennes and his Jacobin cohorts, who talked big about the re-awakening of the lion, and took possession of the Tuileries gardens and the Palais-Royal, the old head-quarters of revolt during the last years—conceived the idea of appealing to the youth of those classes most interested in resisting them. The deputy Fréron, who had only just before been an out-and-out Jacobin, first put himself forward in this appeal, the echoes of which soon thundered only too loud through France. I shall not take up the epic trumpet to recount the exploits of this youth, dubbed *dorée*, because it donned the coat instead of the carmagnole, the black hat instead of the red cap. The arms it carried had nothing noble—but nothing homicidal about them—they were *walking-sticks*. We marched, however, to a tune well fitted to excite alarm in our enemies—the *Réveil du Peuple*. The multitude no longer swelled the ranks we denounced as Terrorist; but we did not want to give it time to rejoin them with its array of pikes. No sooner did a group form itself of an evening, than we were down upon it with our *Réveil du Peuple*, charging it with *coups de bâton*, which almost always effected its prompt dispersion. During a campaign of two or three months, the Convention had no occasion for any guard but ours. We in turn formed the audience in the galleries, the sovereign people, the public at all the theatres, the oracles at all the cafés, the orators at all the sections—in a word, the new and

<sup>1</sup> *Dix Années d'Épreuves pendant la Révolution*, p. 199.

not less absolute dictators of Public Opinion. Lastly, we expelled, with ignominious cudgelling, from their club—the very name of which had so lately thrown Royalty throughout all Europe into ague-fits—*Jacobins* and *Jacobines*—not without something like violence and something like outrage—and we pulled down the Deity Marat from the Pantheon, to throw him into the sewer.

‘What a contrast,’ says Von Sybel, ‘between July 1789 and 1794!’ At the former epoch, the democratic party had stood at the head of all France, and had at its back the boundless hopes and resolute will of the vast majority of the nation. Now, that party was divided and demoralised by its internal discords, while it had made itself, by the fearful abuse of its power, an object of universal abhorrence. Through all Paris, and soon through all France, the cry went forth with daily swelling strength and vehemence, that now was the reign of Force, and Robbery, and Murder come to an end. A multitude of newspapers, the interdict on whose appearance was taken for granted to have been annulled by the 9th Thermidor, hastened to anticipate by energetic manifestoes the views of the people. The *suspects* were already being daily released by hundreds, the Maximum was everywhere set at nought, the exemplary punishment of the great criminals, the tyrants of France during the last two years, was loudly called for. Meanwhile, the Government, still Jacobin in its *personnel* and proclivities, after as before the 9th Thermidor, durst take no pronounced part, whether in repression or furtherance of the national reaction.

In the Convention, Fréron, with the newborn zeal of a renegade, moved that the Hôtel de Ville, *that Louvre of the tyrant Robespierre*, should be razed to the ground. He was more wisely answered, ‘*Punish crime, but do not demolish monuments.*’ M. Dauban hereupon remarks, ‘*C’était un progrès.*’

## VIII.

*THROUGH ANARCHY TO CÆSARISM—NAPOLEON  
THE UNCLE.<sup>1</sup>*

1. *Dr. Rigby's Letters from France, &c., in 1789.* Edited by his Daughter, Lady Eastlake. London, 1880.
2. *Ursprung und Beginn der Revolutionskriege 1791 und 1792.* Von Leopold von Ranke. Leipzig, 1875.
3. *Geschichte der Revolutionszeit von 1789-1800.* Von Heinrich von Sybel. 5 Bände. Stuttgart, 1859-79.
4. *La Révolution de Thermidor. Robespierre et le Comité de Salut Public en l'An II. D'après les Sources Originales et les Documents Secrets.* Par Ch. d'Héricault. Paris, 1876.
5. *L'État de la France au 18 Brumaire, d'après les Rapports des Conseillers d'État chargés d'une Enquête sur la Situation de la République, &c.* Par Félix Rocquain. Paris, 1874.
6. *Directoire—Origine des Bonaparte.* Par J. Michelet. Paris, 1872.
7. *Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat—1802-1808—Publiés par son Petit-Fils Paul de Rémusat, Sénateur de la Haute-Garonne.* 3 vols. Paris, 1880.

THE veteran historian, Leopold Von Ranke, has established one more claim, in addition to all his other claims, to the grateful acknowledgments of inquirers after historical truth by his recent publication on the 'Origin and Beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars.' We may say that while Professor Von Sybel, in his great work, the 'History of the Revolution-Time,' has given the world the most complete, and on the whole satisfactory narrative of all the vicissitudes of that troubled epoch Professor Von Ranke now supplies the most judicially impartial summing-up of the *cause célèbre* so long contested between France and Europe—the never-ending controversy on the still-vexed question, *who began* the last great European war of principle?

The spring of 1792 witnessed the declaration of war between France and Austria by Louis XVI., or rather by his Girondin ministry in his name. The autumn of 1802 wit-

<sup>1</sup> Now first published.



nessed the signature between France and England of the peace, or rather truce, of Amiens, under the first consulate of the first Napoleon. What were the causes which had rendered the decade of years between those two epochs a decade, not of French revolutionary convulsions only, but of European conflict? The answer to that question must depend on the answer to another question. What were the causes of national and international *anarchy* in France and Europe?

‘How such a convulsion as the Revolution,’ says Lady Eastlake, in her thoughtful introduction to her father’s artlessly interesting ‘Letters from France,’ addressed to his daughters in the storm-pregnant summer of 1789, ‘should have occurred exactly when the causes that led to it were in the act of subsiding . . . is a question on which inquiry is insatiable and materials interminable—it may be added—and solution impossible.’

How the Revolution should have so soon passed into a ‘convulsion’ was, indeed, a strange surprise to its devout adherents. *The Revolution* was already accomplished in men’s minds before ever the States-General met. The only question was, who should seize its guidance? And on the question whether the old royal executive could, or could not, hold its own in France, depended the question whether or not the Revolution should break wholly with the historical past of France and Europe.

Amongst the merits which distinguish Professor Von Sybel’s great historical work is that he holds the balance very fairly even between the crimes of despots and of demagogues. He is far from charging exclusively on the French Revolution and its leaders all the calamities which came over Europe like a flood during the last eventful decade of the eighteenth and throughout the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. In the sense of setting all laws of nations at defiance, and spurning all barriers, save those opposed by superior force, to their lust of aggrandisement, Frederick the Great and Catherine of Russia were amongst the most revolutionary potentates that ever existed. It was

primarily due to their joint policy of perfidy and violence in Eastern Europe that Germany opposed no effective combined force to the revolutionary torrent which so soon burst on her from the West. To the distrusts and discords engendered between the natural conservators of the established European balance of power by their mutual guilt and conflicting cupidity in two successive partitions of Poland—to the division of councils at the crisis of their common fate caused by their common crime—cannot but be mainly ascribed the failure of the German Powers to confront anarchy in France, or even to resist the subjugation and spoliation of Germany, begun by the armies of the first French Republic, and consummated by those of the first French Empire. Never did national punishments follow more closely upon national sins. If Central Europe was, from first to last, crippled in the life-and-death struggle with revolutionised France, this was due less to the force of French attack than to the feebleness of German defence. The curse of Poland, the scramble of Prussia and Austria for the lion's share of her spoil, rendered impossible all effective continental combination against the common enemy. Before the close of the last century, the Republic one and indivisible had triumphed over all the divided (which should have been united) Powers of Europe, that is to say, over every Power but England, for England was not drawn off from the duty of encountering hostile force by the appetite for despoiling prostrate weakness. She had England to defend and no Poland to plunder.

Anarchy in Europe then—international anarchy produced by the lawless will of her rulers—preceded anarchy in France, and rendered Europe defenceless against French invasion. But what were the direct and immediate sources of anarchy in France, the sole possible diversion from the destructive intestine action of which was to be sought and found in carrying war over Europe? We should regard it as little less than blasphemy against God, and a gospel of despair to man, to subscribe to that fatalistic philosophy of circumstance so long accredited amongst French popular

historians, according to which, the revolutionary impulse once given, everything else followed. Yes, if man abdicated his whole function as a moral being, and left the entire arbitrament of human events to the blind force of things. But that noble sentence of Madame de Staël should be held in immortal remembrance, '*C'est aussi une circonstance que le courage d'un honnête homme.*'

The two great needs of France in 1789 were a *king* and a *minister*. A minister who could read aright the signs of the time, a king who would stand by his minister. Even a Louis XIII., with a Richelieu beside him, exerted a predominant influence over the whole policy of Europe. A William I. of Prussia, with a Bismarck beside him, vanquished France and *annexed* Germany. It was the initiative of the royal government itself in France that brought revolution to the birth, and then shrank from the obstetrical office that belonged to it. It was the royal government that deliberately swamped, at the outset, the two privileged orders in the States-General (by giving the Tiers a double vote), and then failed to seize the dictatorship of the democracy it had called into existence. There was a moment, a fleeting moment, in the fateful year 1789 when the king's name was still a tower of strength, and when a king and a minister, who should have known and used that strength, might have remained masters of the situation. Poor Louis XVI., the Hamlet of monarchs, was a man certainly of the best intentions that ever went to the paving of a pandemonium. Truly might he have said, like his Shakspearian prototype—

The time is out of joint—O cursed spite  
That ever *I* was born to set it right.

The wealthy and circumspect Count de Chambord may be deemed wise in his generation, who declares publicly that he never will be King of a Revolution. To be King of a Revolution, however, or no king at all, were the sole possible alternatives placed before Louis XVI. in 1789. In default of the hardly to be hoped-for double phenomenon of a king and minister standing firm by each other at such

an epoch as the opening of the States-General, what was there left between France and anarchy? Nothing. What between anarchy and war? Again nothing. Anarchy in France was, from the first, portentous of war in Europe. War, indeed, and the government of men by martial in default of all other law, offered the sole ultimate rescue from the most destructive consequences of intestine discords.

For what, after all, did the French so-called Constituent Assembly constitute? It constituted forty odd thousand little independent Republics. The uncontrolled autonomy which the insurgent Commune of 1871 claimed to set up in Paris, the Constituent Assembly of 1789 set up in every commune of France. All the legal means of action, which should have been specially and carefully reserved to the central executive power and its local agents, were by the Constituent Assembly dropped into, or devolved upon, hands utterly unaccustomed to wield them. It was decentralisation run mad, and that at a moment when the action of the central executive was more indispensable than at any previous epoch of French history. No gift more fatal could have been made to a people like the French at such an epoch as that before us than that of local autonomy, practically unchecked by any central power representing the nation.

So early as January 1790, Gouverneur Morris, afterwards American Minister at Paris, relates as follows a conversation he had held with M. de Montmorin, at that time Foreign Minister of Louis XVI.:—‘In talking over the deplorable situation to which the kingdom was reduced, I told him that I saw no means of establishing peace at home but by making war abroad.’ Writing from London in the spring of the same year to a French friend in Paris, we find Gouverneur Morris again harping on the same string:—‘I see no means of extricating you from your troubles, but that which most men would consider as the means of plunging you into greater—I mean *a war*. And you should make it to yourselves a war of *men*, to your neighbours a war of *money*. I do not explain, because a word to the wise is sufficient.’

Who shall say that Machiavellic counsels are only addressed to princes? Here is the whole theory which was afterwards carried into practical effect in the French revolutionary conflict with Europe, and which was finally summarised in the notorious Napoleonic formula of *making war support itself*, propounded beforehand in cold blood by an unconcerned American bystander, as the sole issue that could be opened from the desperate internal situation of France!

It has long been the theory of ultra-popular politicians amongst ourselves, that the excesses of the French Revolution were solely owing to the unprovoked attempts of the Powers of Europe to suppress it. The wolves fell foul of the lamb for alleged troubling of the political waters; and the lamb waxed wolf-like in successfully repelling their unjust aggression. This is a very pretty theory; it has but one fault—that of contradiction with facts. The great Powers of Europe were at first, notwithstanding the embarrassing importunities of the French emigrant nobles, incontestably reluctant to engage in war with France—always with the exception of Russia, which was very willing that *other Powers* should commit themselves in active hostilities with their revolutionised neighbours, to disable them from any effective combination against Russian aggrandisement. At the epoch when France declared war with Austria (April 20, 1792) she had distinctly the choice of peace or war in her own hands.

If it is not true that France, in April 1792, was first attacked by Austria, still less is it true that, in February 1793, she was first attacked by England. In the preceding year England had held herself aloof from the Austrian and Prussian belligerents, and had proclaimed, and observed as long as France would let her, a policy of strict neutrality. It is almost enough to say that, at the epoch when war broke out between France and England, our Prime Minister was Pitt, and our Foreign Minister Grenville. The hopes and wishes of the former statesman were fixed on peace with a view to financial reform; and the principles of the latter were not

less fixedly opposed to all military intervention in continental politics. So late as Pitt's Budget speech of 1792, in moving a *reduction* of the military and naval estimates, he hazarded the anticipation (rashly, as the event proved), that 'there never was a time in the history of this country when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace!' The judgment stands on record of so competent and impartial an authority as the late Sir George Lewis, that the grounds upon which the Convention declared war with England (on February 1, 1793), 'were frivolous almost beyond example.'<sup>1</sup>

Of all foreign historians (always excepting the redoubtable Anglophobe Professor Von Treitschke), the most uniformly aspersive on England (and on most people besides) is F. C. Schlosser, author of the well-known '*Geschichte des XVIIIen Jahrhunderts*.' Schlosser may be described as the German Cobbett amongst historians. As he has no reticences, and no *respects humains*, he is, like Cobbett, capital reading, and from amongst his outspoken animosities and antipathies one can generally extract the truth on most matters. With reference to the resolutions adopted at the much magnified Conference held at Pillnitz, between the Emperor Leopold of Austria and King Frederick William II. of Prussia, on August 27, 1791, Schlosser says that England declared to those Powers that she would have nothing to do with a war of principles against France. [Von Sybel and Ranke have added ample proofs of her neutral policy.] 'If,' continues Schlosser, 'nothing came in question that regarded *meum* and *tuum*, she would, like all those practical spirits whom Dante excludes alike from heaven and hell, remain neutral.' In the position of England towards France and Europe a wiser resolution could not have been taken. Towards the close of the next year France, by setting at nought the treaty engagements of England, compelled her to prepare for war, and soon after herself declared war on England.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on the Administration of Great Britain from 1783 to 1830.* London, 1864.

It must be frankly admitted, as Professor Von Ranke sets forth with characteristic impartiality, that Austria showed at that epoch the unfortunate talent which she has shown on other occasions for precipitating war in her awkward efforts to preserve peace. Old Prince Kaunitz, the octogenarian Chancellor of that old shadow of empire—the Holy Roman—who had been minister of Austria in three eventful reigns, and remained so at the opening of a fourth reign, destined to be more eventful than any preceding it—was perhaps the best representative of the deliberate disposition of conservative monarchical Europe towards revolutionised France. No man in Europe less accessible to French emigrant illusions about any possible restoration of antiquated feudal abuses—no man less bigoted to right divine whether in priests or princes. But, while it may safely be affirmed that the intention of his diplomacy at this epoch was pacific, it must, on the other hand, be admitted that nothing could have played more unluckily than the tone of that diplomacy into the hands of the war party in France. Kaunitz knew only one way of dealing with spiritual powers obnoxious to him—viz., by snubbing them. He had tried that method with Pope Pius VI., when he came to Vienna some ten years before, to endeavour to induce Joseph II. to desist from the process of which he had set the first example to subsequent crowned or uncrowned revolutionists—the process, namely, of wholesale confiscation of ecclesiastical and conventual property. Snubbing the Pope, however, had not rendered Belgium less disaffected to Austria. Kaunitz now again found himself confronted by a new and still more formidable spiritual power in France—that of the revolutionary apostles of the Gospel of the Contrat Social in the Paris Jacobin Club. Upon these, too, he tried his old method of verbal snubbing. All he said in his despatches of their dangerous and destructive ascendancy was undoubtedly true, and was in fact inspired by the confidential communications of some of the leading ex-champions of constitutional principles in the French Constituent Assembly. Kaunitz, however, was apparently not aware of a great truth in politics, taught

since to the world to some purpose by a Napoleon and afterwards by a Bismarck—that hard words, to produce the effect intended, must be backed by hard blows, or at least by plain demonstration of readiness to strike hard blows.

It would be difficult to imagine two men more different in character, and more diverse in faculty for acting on other men, than Maximilian Robespierre and Napoleon Bonaparte. Nothing could be more marked than the moral antipathy of the two characters; yet nothing could follow more naturally than the sway of the soldier after that of the demagogue. It may be added that Robespierre foresaw, as clearly as his range of mental vision rendered him capable of foreseeing anything, the period which would be put to his popular ascendancy by the rise of a military dictator.

The power of Robespierre was that of popular revolution pushed to its extreme consequences; the power of Napoleon that of military dictatorship thereon ensuing—Punishment after Sin. Robespierre seemed to have taken in hand to ‘shorten by the head’ all of the human race who gave umbrage in any way to his engrossing ambition of solitary and unpartaken ascendancy, or alarm in any way to his jealousy of whatever outgrew the stature of his own moral and intellectual mediocrity. Madame de Staël said of the first Napoleon, that he seemed to have taken in hand to *checkmate the human race* collectively. Ultra-popular politicians show some dim sense of the discipline good for them when they exalt the achievements of Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte.

The inevitable end of such a power as that of the Terror-triumvirate in France resulted from the national feeling, which could not but at length assert itself, of the utter incompatibility of its prolonged duration with civilised existence. But the champion of civilisation in the last resort must be some one with a sword in his hand. The armies of France alone had preserved the traditions of command and obedience. The Terror-triumvirate, resting for support solely on an armed populace, and holding power by the sole tenure of subserviency to its passions,



was of necessity followed by the less intolerable terrorism of a trained and disciplined armed force under the leader who was unanimously acclaimed ablest to wield it.

In the spring of 1793, that is to say, in the dreary dawn of the Reign of Terror, Dutard, one of the police ‘observers’ under Garat’s Ministry of the Interior, reports as follows to his employer :—

I fell in yesterday with officers of the line, all quiet-looking men, but all of them with a very good air and long swords. It is curious to see what respect that military air impresses on the people—how a man is looked at who wears moustaches, and lets his sabre trail on the ground—how people of all sorts run after him to learn who he is, what corps he belongs to, *and what serious reflections the sight of arms and uniforms seems to inspire in the people.*

The five years from the fall of the Bastille to the Triumvirate of the ‘Terror’ witnessed the flood-tide of the first great French Revolution—the five following years its ebb. No section of French revolutionary history has been less studied than these five transition years from the word-power of Robespierre to the sword-power of Napoleon. And in truth no subject of historical study could be more dispiriting—no drearier ebb of a more tumultuous tide. Those five years have been glided and glossed over accordingly by French popular historians as regarded internal politics, and their main efforts directed to *faire mousser les victoires* of French armies on the frontiers. The late M. Thiers accomplished the double feat of glorifying in succession the short-lived triumph of democracy and the Napoleonic Cæsarism which crushed it. But he made no attempt at bridging over the tremendous chasm between, or bringing out how it happened that the military overthrow of a rabble-régime, which might be termed anarchy on system, was hailed by the French people generally with no less unequivocal plaudits than its popular inauguration had been ten years before.

Civilisation affords no precedent or parallel throughout its annals for the state of things immediately succeeding the fall of Robespierre. So completely had the whole Terrorist

system been identified in the public mind with his name,<sup>1</sup> that his death was hailed with universal joy as the death of the Terror. Hope—the hope of a life other than life in death—resurged from under the heaped homicides which, during the Terror-triumvirate, had been decimating, not the aristocracy only, but the democracy of France, and transforming her bright capital into a human *abattoir*. As a population flying from the eruption of a volcano, when it has burnt itself out, return rejoicing to their homes, though only to find those homes in ashes,<sup>2</sup> so the people of Paris, surrounded as they still were by danger and misery—the blood fresh shed still smoking—the edicts of a tyranny unexampled in history still unrepealed—were elevated by the sudden intoxication of joy above all their necessities, and filled the streets the whole of the 10th Thermidor, and the night following, with their jubilant groups. ‘I have often asked,’ says the late historian, Michelet, ‘the survivors of that epoch, what were the people’s thoughts, what their wishes, after that immense convulsion. “To live,” they answered. And what else? “To LIVE!”’

M. Michelet has somewhat sacrificed, *sicut suus est mos*, accuracy to effect in describing the Parisians, after the 9th Thermidor, as having seen *with astonishment and admiration* the cessation of executions on the Place de la Révolution, now the Place de la Concorde. It is true that the latest executions just witnessed (those of the Terror-triumvirate themselves, and their satellites in the Commune, whom the Convention had voted *hors-la-loi* along with them) were performed on that noted or notorious theatre of revolutionary justice. But for nearly two months before the fall of Robespierre, the disgust and horror unmistakably, though passively, testified by the Parisians generally at the multiplied massacres on that spot had compelled the governing committees to shift the scene, first to the Place Saint

<sup>1</sup> ‘It was not,’ justly observes M. d’Héricault, ‘after the fall of Hébert, it was not after the fall of Danton, *it was on the fall of Robespierre*, that the Terror came to an end. Down to the day of his death the Terror had redoubled in violence. When *he* disappeared, the Terror disappeared too.’

<sup>2</sup> Von Sybel.

Antoine, and afterwards to the Barrière du Trône. On that spot, says Barante,<sup>1</sup> twelve hundred and fifty-one persons were executed within six weeks.

After the first moment of impulsive unreflective joy on the sudden collapse of terrorism, there arose a cry of myriads of surviving sufferers for justice—for vengeance. When the prisons were opened, and the hundreds of thousands released who had been immured there without crime—without even specific charge of crime—many returned to their homes only to find those homes stripped and desolated. The revolutionary committees, in every town and village, had laid under sequestration the houses and goods of persons arbitrarily arrested, and had then, in innumerable instances, themselves broken the seals. Strong-boxes had been ransacked, furniture carried off, innocent and respectable persons without number robbed, outraged, orphaned. Few families but had to lament the judicial murder of one or more of their members. Exasperation was unbounded and universal—exasperation among the surviving victims of the Terror, provoked by its crimes—amongst its agents and satellites, provoked by the cessation of those crimes.

The net result of that unparalleled régime has been placed on record as follows, by a politician of orthodox Montagnard antecedents, Robert Lindet, in a speech delivered in the National Convention, September 1794, that is to say, about two months after the fall of Robespierre.

We had reason to fear that the rural districts would no longer have hands for their culture, since landholders were either languishing in prison or withdrawn from labour to attend clubs and revolutionary committees. Commercial activity has dwindled down to nothing; the necessities of the people are aggravated, while unproductive consumption goes on at an extravagant rate. Trade is disorganised, the materials of manufacturers are under seal of sequestration, all branches but those for the supply of the armies have ceased working, all classes, all divisions of the people are estranged from each other; seeds of discord are sown broadcast, and rapidly germinate between towns and villages, peasants and artisans, neighbouring communes and family connections. The genius of discord traverses the country with destructive strides from one end to the other.

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la Convention Nationale*, tome iv. p. 371.

The condition of France in the years succeeding the collapse of the Terror resembled that of the man in Scripture from whom the unclean spirit had gone out—walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. ‘Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh unto himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first.’ One is involuntarily reminded of the text of St. Matthew above cited by the doings, or rather the intended doings, of the desperate *seven* who took principal part in the conspiracy which goes by the name of Babeuf. Babeuf’s conspiracy fills a pretty long chapter in the fourth volume of Professor Von Sybel’s ‘History of the Revolution-Time;’ and the late M. Michelet, in the last volume he published before his death, did his best to rehabilitate with posterity the obscure ill-fame of the Babouvists—not, indeed, in their public acts, or abortive attempts at action, but in their poetically imagined public *motives*.

The social-democratic doctrine of the confiscation of all wealth, public and private, for the assumed benefit of an omnipotent and all-levelling proletariat was not left to the *mauvaises têtes* of the present century for the first time to propound and seek to apply in practice. ‘*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona.*’ That doctrine had been formulated by Babeuf and his fellow-conspirators with as much precision and (to say the least) as much vigour of expression, and prepared to be carried into practical effect with as much violence, as its later votaries have ever exhibited, whether in language or action. The intended insurrection of the Babouvists in Paris—discovered and stifled on the eve of explosion—might by possibility have been momentarily successful in May 1796, as was that of the Communists in March 1871. Its avowed aim was to take up anew, in a social sense, the work which the Terror had left unfinished. Jacobinism had brought Communism to the birth, but had not strength to bring forth.

The ‘desperate discontents, which finally exploded in

Babouvism, were the natural offspring of the state of things produced in France by the régime of the Terror. The exclusive appropriation of the wealth of the country to its proletariat had not, indeed, been regularly formulated in theory under that régime, but the effort to put it in effect in practice had been extended over the whole length and breadth of France. Landed and monied wealth had not been in terms denounced as a crime, but the possession of landed or monied wealth had been tacitly taken as a vehement presumption of the vague crime of *incivism*, almost in itself sufficient to sweep its possessors within the category of ‘*suspects*.’

To have been driven by dread of murder or outrage to leave one's land, was to incur the doom of death denounced by the ‘Law of Emigrants’ on return. To be found in possession of specie was to incur the same doom, unless surrendered to the authorities of the day for worthless paper. When the ex-butcher Legendre vociferated to Lanjuinais in the Convention ‘*Je t’assommerai!*’ the latter replied quietly, ‘*Fais décréter que je suis un bœuf, Legendre—tu m’assommeras après!*’ In like manner large, and presently also small, landowners were assumed under the Terror to be aristocrats; capitalists and merchants were branded *en masse* with the vague imputation, invented by Robespierre and St. Just, of *négotiantisme*. From thence it was but a step, in the pet phrase of the epoch, to ‘coin money on the Place de la Révolution’ by decapitation of both. Practice in all branches precedes theory. The Jacobin Terror-triumvirate had attempted to put in practice that exclusive proletarian possession of all wealth which we find again extensively proclaimed in theory at the present day. The progress of that experiment in national economy having been cut short in Thermidor (but not till it had universalised poverty instead of wealth), Babeuf and his fellow-conspirators arose to re-vindicate the Robespierrian practice, as having failed only because it did not go far enough, and explicitly to enunciate the doctrine of universal confiscation and equalisation which had been implicitly involved in the practical policy of the Terror.

The Communism of Babeuf was the last and logically consistent development of Jacobinism, and contained the germs of all that has frightened Europe from her propriety within these late years. But on its first barefaced apparition its doom was sealed in a country which meant to continue civilised, however severe a shock its civilisation had suffered. The mere possibility that a set of men, banded to accomplish such ends by such means as those proposed and adopted by Babeuf and his fellow-conspirators, should make themselves masters by surprise of Paris (as their worthy emulators of the Commune actually did seventy-five years afterwards), immensely increased the force of the reaction which had already set in throughout France, and was already beginning to invoke, and prepared to welcome, a military dictatorship, as holding out the sole remaining hope of tranquillity and security.

At the epoch when Terrorism committed suicide after all its murders, France had become, throughout her whole length and breadth, passionately anti-Jacobin. No man could have been better fitted to assist a nation in putting an end for the time to its own revolutionary political life than one who, like the first Napoleon, had no sympathy with that life in any shape.

Whatever there was of generous feeling in his generous years—and the *res angusta domi*, as well as the intensely personal character of his ambition, cut those years very short—was expressed in his early adhesion to Paoli, the unsuccessful champion of independence of his island country, Corsica. Whatever there was of patriotism in his heart was Corsican, and therefore anti-Gallic. But it is curious to mark how his only sincere political allegiance (that which he professed to Paoli) gave way at once to the first early promptings of his personal ambition, which also was Corsican, not French. The first rehearsal of the *coup d'état* at Saint Cloud, which made him master of France, was struck by the young Bonaparte at his native town of Ajaccio, to carry his own appointment as *chef de bataillon* in the national guard of his province. The French Constituent Assembly had sent a

commissioner to Corsica to control the native factions in the elections; and the rival candidate having contrived to get the commissioner to his house, and thus to secure that the official weight should be thrown in his own scale, young Bonaparte, at the head of his probably also young partisans, made an armed attack on the house, carried off the commissioner, and by mingled intimidation and cajolery, made conquest of that presiding influence in favour of his own election. He was at this time a subaltern officer in the French army, which still called itself royal, and his absence without leave in Corsica was a breach of discipline, in those days an unconsidered trifle. Amongst the papers found at the Tuileries in the sack of the 10th of August was a captain's commission, signed by Louis XVI., for the young artillery officer, for whom an ex-governor of Corsica, a friend of the Bonaparte family, had obtained the previous favour of professional education in the military school of Brienne.

Captain Bonaparte witnessed with the disgust and displeasure with which a military eye could not but witness the mob triumph of the 10th August (preluded by the 20th June) 1792 over the last remaining regular force of the French monarchy. It cannot be doubted that, had *he* been in a position to command the combined action of the sound portion of the National Guard and the Swiss troops in the Tuileries, the result of that fatal day would have been different. It further appears, from the St. Helena memorials, that if his Girondin friends could have, at a later period, enabled him to use his sword in *their* defence, the young soldier of fortune would have very willingly done so. But he soon made up his mind to take part with the stronger side, and since the mob-force under Jacobin leadership demonstrated itself for the time the stronger against the Gironde, Captain Bonaparte threw first his pen and then his sword into the Jacobin scale. He had no belief in the Jacobin programme of pure ochlocracy, but he had good hope that a resolute and accomplished military adventurer like himself could cut his fortune with his sword out of the political chaos. Such is the sole inspiration of the curious

little tract, in form of dialogue, entitled *Le Souper de Beaucaire*, which he thought it expedient to publish soon after the decisive overthrow of his Girondin friends. Napoleon acknowledged afterwards that all his political sympathies had been on the side of the Gironde, but after the event of the 2nd June 1793, he set himself to show, in the pamphlet above referred to, that it was decidedly an act of 'civism' to adhere to the Mountain, the Mountain having for the time proved itself the stronger party. An adhesion advocated on such grounds of course depended for its duration on the Mountain continuing to show itself the stronger party, and after the 9th Thermidor, Bonaparte lost no time in hauling down the Robespierrian colours he had hoisted for the nonce in the *Souper de Beaucaire*.

The first distinguished service of the young artillery officer to the Republic was performed at the siege of Toulon in 1793, his Corsican countryman Salicetti, then a commissary of the National Convention attached to the army, having introduced him to the ignorant Jacobin general, Carteaux, to teach him where to place and how to point his guns. His good service at Toulon raised young Bonaparte to the rank of general of artillery, and procured him fresh opportunities of distinction in the army of Italy, of which Robespierre junior was then the political dictator, as Robespierre senior was of France. After the fall of the Robespierres, the army of Italy was regarded by the moderate Thermidorians (for the moment ascendant) as the military headquarters of the deposed terrorism, and amongst those most obnoxious by their terrorist antecedents or associations, the young military protégé of the Robespierres could not well escape removal. Bonaparte, to his intense disgust, was transferred to the command of a brigade of infantry in the west, that is to say, on the inglorious theatre of civil warfare in La Vendée. This appointment he made no haste to take up on the plea of ill-health, and accordingly remained in a manner professionally shelved at Paris. But a man who had proved his power to make himself useful could not long remain unused. The army of Italy having



suffered serious reverses, the war administration bethought themselves of the young general of artillery who had taken Toulon, and attached him to their topographical committee to draw up plans of campaign to be addressed to the generals of that army.

In this capacity Bonaparte drew up for Generals Kellerman and Scherer successively a series of instructions, which he was enabled the year after to carry out in his campaign of Italy on his own account. Kellerman replied that the author of such instructions should be sent to a madhouse; Scherer, that the man who had drawn them up was the only man who could be expected to execute them. In the meanwhile occurred the momentous day of the 13th Vendémiaire (5th October 1795), a day which decided that the old man of the Mountain was not quite out of the saddle yet, and gave Bonaparte opportunity to take as usual the stronger side, and bring in play his artillery against the anti-Jacobin sections of Paris, as he had done two years before against the anti-Jacobin citizens of Toulon. ‘The 13th Vendémiaire,’ justly observes M. Lanfrey, ‘showed all the world how decisive a weight the sword of a soldier could throw into the balance. That fatal day first accustomed the sovereign power to count on the army. It first prepared the way for military government.’<sup>1</sup>

The anti-Jacobin electors, ascendant in the sections of Paris, had shown reckless imprudence in setting the first example of that *war of the streets* of which Paris has since seen so many repetitions. A ‘whiff of grapeshot,’<sup>2</sup> under the skilful direction of Bonaparte, sufficed to put down their movement. But, far from putting down, it exasperated the general discontent of the nation; and as the partial elections, which the Convention could not prevent nor influence, invariably returned opponents of the ex-Jacobin rump, it soon became a matter of certainty that the new Legislature (consisting, by the Constitution of *An III.* of two Councils, a third of whose members was to be subject to annual re-elec-

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de Napoléon*, vol. i. p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle's *French Revolution*.

tion) would speedily find itself in hostile confrontation with the executive power, consisting of five Directors, one of whom only was to be re-elected annually—all five of whom had been nominated by the unreformed Convention—all five being regicides. This foreseen event was obviated in right Jacobin fashion by the Directorial *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor, followed up by the sweeping proscription, and intentionally murderous deportation to Cayenne, of the anti-Jacobin and moderate members of both Councils. This was the second (and this time openly illegal) intervention of the army in Paris instigated (as the first had been executed) by Bonaparte, who had been exasperated by the attacks in the Councils on his high-handed military diplomacy in Italy. The Constitution of *An III.* had given the legislative and executive powers no legal means of exercising any reciprocal control of each other's action. Precisely the same blunder was repeated, fifty-three years afterwards, in the Constitution of 1848, with precisely the same result; viz. that the executive power, which had the military force at its back, remained master of the field against a clear majority of the Legislature.

The advancement of Bonaparte to so eminent a post as the chief command in Italy had been owing, in part at least, to his marriage with Joséphine Beauharnais, who enjoyed the influential friendship and protection of the Director Barras. Thus it was under the ex-Jacobin auspices, ascendant at that time in the Directory, that the bright field of Italy was thrown open to the military ambition of Bonaparte, and to the fiscal rapacity of the ephemeral rulers he despised and served.

The late M. Lanfrey has earned the acknowledgments of all solicitous for the truth of history by his penetrating and thoroughly informed exposure of the lying Napoleonic legend of St. Helena. But we cannot admit the fidelity to fact of the contrast he draws between the ambition and rapacity of Napoleon, first developed in the campaign of Italy, and the pure philanthropy of Republican propagandism which he thinks fit to ascribe to the elder champions of

Revolution. He contrasts the avowed predatory incentives addressed by the first Napoleon to the army of Italy in 1796, with the alleged exalted generosity of the motives of the first revolutionary campaigns of 1792. Now it may be admitted that the new-fledged Republicans of France, in the first year of their war with Europe, did not at once confess to themselves the mere unprincipled greed of territory and money, which the profligate pentarchy of the Luxembourg, some four years afterwards, had arrived at the impudence of ceasing to disguise from themselves or others. But it is no less certain that the National Convention and its commissaries, in 1792-4, could not easily be surpassed by the Directory or its young general of 1796, in their avowed purpose of plundering, in every possible shape, the countries they invaded, to make them pay the price for emancipation by the armed apostles of sansculottism from the tyranny of priests, kings, and kaisers. The early Revolutionary generosity lauded by M. Lanfrey took the same practical shape towards Belgium, Holland, and Germany, as the later rapacity of the Directory towards Italy and Switzerland. The proclamation addressed by Bonaparte to his army, at the opening of his Italian campaign, is censured by M. Lanfrey as breathing an utterly opposite spirit to that which had hitherto animated the armies of the Republic, and as announcing, not a war of liberty, but a war of conquest. Why, what had the war hitherto been but a war of conquest? Why was the war protracted but because neither in Belgium, on the Rhine, or in Holland, would revolutionary France surrender one of her conquests to purchase peace? Where had she founded liberty?—whither had she not carried annexation, rapine, and robbery, in its abused name?

A few pages farther on M. Lanfrey finds himself constrained by the force of facts to set the saddle on the right horse, and charge on the Directory (all Revolutionists *pur sang*—that is to say, all regicides)—the predatory character stamped on the campaigns of Italy. ‘The further instructions,’ he says, ‘addressed by the Directors to Bonaparte, exercised a dominant and deplorable influence on the con-

duct of the war. For there is something more deplorable still than the policy of conquest, and that is the policy of depredation.'

It is idle to seek to make Bonaparte the sole scapegoat for the sordid sins of his right revolutionary employers. While he was plundering Italy to prop the sinking credit of the Directorial firm at Paris, none of the plunder stuck to his own fingers. He flew at higher game. His ambition for power and pre-eminence had none of the miserable mammon stains of the Siéyès and Rewbells. In a communication addressed by the Directors to the General on the 15th of May 1796, they explained their predatory intentions at least with sufficient clearness. 'The resources you may procure,' they wrote to Bonaparte, 'are to be remitted to France. Leave nothing in Italy which our *political situation* (i.e. having the point of our sword at Italy's throat) enables you to carry off, and which can be useful to us.' Bonaparte admirably well knew how to serve such masters so as to secure a firm footing in their service. He poured into the laps of these battered Danaes of decrepit Jacobinism all he could extort of money and art-treasures from the princes and people of Italy. But he diverted no portion of those treasures to his own use. He winked hard at the scandalous fortunes made by the other generals and agents, while he let them see that he was not their dupe, and so prepared them to feel him their future master. 'As for himself,' acknowledges M. Lanfrey, 'amongst so many venal souls, he chose to remain incorruptible; but he so remained by superiority of pride and ambition, rather than virtue.'

Bonaparte having climbed to its topmost round the

<sup>1</sup> The *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* relates that, when Bonaparte was treating with the Duke of Modena, Salicetti (his Corsican compatriot, who had first introduced him to employment as an artillery officer at Toulon) came to speak to him privately in his cabinet as follows:—'The Commander D'Este, brother of the Duke, is here with four millions of gold in four chests. He comes to beg you, in his brother's name, to accept them, and I advise you to do so. The Directory and the Corps Législatif will never remunerate you for your services. This is fairly yours—accept it without scruple and without publicity.' Bonaparte replied coldly, 'Thank you; I am not going, for that sum of money, to put myself at the disposal of the Duke of Modena.'

Jacobin ladder towards autocracy, nothing remained, when it could help him no higher up, but to kick it contemptuously down, and throw himself openly on the army and on the country, which were equally sick of Jacobinism and all its works; and neither of which he had any difficulty in inspiring with the same contempt for the corrupt pentarchy at the Luxembourg, which he himself had impatiently dissembled for years till the pear was ripe, as he saw it to be after his return from Egypt, for transferring into his own hands their unpopular sovereignty—a transfer made by perhaps the most bungled of *coups d'état* that ever was struck—but which could not be so bungled as to be unsuccessful.

It would be impossible to imagine a more extraordinary spectacle of an old civilised country fallen, as it were, to pieces—into a state of utter social and administrative disorganisation—of utter disruption of all the ties which hold society together—all security for order, all guarantees of right or protection from wrong—than that which was exhibited throughout the length and breadth of France under the Convention and Directory, down to the decisive epoch of the 18th Brumaire. So far as national opinion could still be said to exist in France, or could make itself audible, that opinion was for the restoration of the *gendarme* in some shape or other, as the sole champion of civilisation in the last resort, as the sole agency which could save the body politic from dissolution and decomposition. Military dictatorship was alone possible after Jacobin demagogism, and all its destructive consequences.

A political pamphleteer of long-lived notoriety, M. Fievée, has left on record in his 'Memoirs' that, while living retired in the country in the heart of the Bourbonnais, towards the close of the year 1799, there was one observation which he had daily occasion to make, and which alone recalled him to politics. 'Every peasant I met,' he says, 'in the fields, in the woods, or vineyards, accosted me to ask if I had any news of General Bonaparte, and why he did not return to France? No one ever made any inquiry about the Directory!' France already recognised her master, untowardly

detained, as he was just then, by stress of Nelson and Sidney Smith, from returning to rule her.

When General Bonaparte at length effected his return from Egypt, he found 'the pear ripe' for finally seizing supreme power into his own hands. M. Michelet, in his random way of hitting, hits the right nail on the head in the reasons he assigns why, not the army only, but also the people, gave in its adhesion to the young military Dictator when he decisively threw his sword into the scale on the 18th Brumaire.

'It was thought best,' he says, in a tone of irony which does not affect the substantial truth of the statement, 'to trust *that Italian* who gave hopes to all the world. This is what had been seen so often in Italy, when a city-commonwealth, despairing of native pacification of its internal discords, confided the task to some stranger brought from a distance—an armed judge, a *podestat*. Society itself appeared in peril, and to save it recourse was had to *the great Italian promiser*, who gained to his side the two classes of proprietors, the old and the new, by guaranteeing to the latter their newly-acquired possessions, gratifying the former with places, and giving them back so much of their property as had not actually fallen by public sale into other hands.'

All things, to a Frenchman, so soon become antiquated, that it is nothing surprising M. Michelet should lump together as *old proprietors* the multitude of all classes—land-owners, farmers, manufacturers, simple peasants, and work-people—who had been driven out of France but a few years before by the Terror. Those multitudes who had nothing whatever in common with the first Royalist emigration, formed a large proportion of the emigrants seeking re-admission after Thermidor. M. Michelet says their re-admission was 'a magnanimous imprudence.' It was a political necessity, which the moribund Convention and Directory had as little power as they had right to resist. But there can be no doubt that the re-admission into France of multitudes of all classes expelled and plundered by the Terror, and the relief of multitudes more of relatives of emigrants from the infamous laws of proscription and confiscation,

which had been extended to *them*, opposed new difficulties to the retention or resumption of power by the proscribers and confiscators. There was equal difficulty in substituting the sway of any other party sufficiently strong and cool to hold the requisite balance between conflicting interests. The exiled Royalists, with their unsubdued pride and unsundered pretensions, had played their part so badly that they had lost all chance of serving or saving their country at the crisis now under our review. Remained the army, and its universally recognised Representative Man.

In the minds of the soldiery 'the Revolution' no longer meant anything else than the decisive preponderance of a democratically organised army.<sup>1</sup> In the nation at large, all that was left of love for the Revolution might more fitly have been termed hatred of the old régime. The mass of cultivators of the soil in France—who were neither military nor political, but who hated Jacobinism because it hindered the return of internal tranquillity and prosperity, and dreaded Royalism because it portended the return of the old lords of the soil to their confiscated estates and abolished privileges—came by some curious instinct to regard the first Napoleon, who has sometimes been styled 'the child and champion of Jacobinism,' as the man whose military decision of character rendered him the most likely to be able and disposed to protect them from a revived 'Terror' or a restored Feudalism.

Professor von Sybel draws the following striking and lifelike portrait of the young Dictator in prospect, as he appeared in Paris in the spring of 1798, the year before his assumption of an authority in effect absolute—an assumption which can scarcely be called an usurpation, so readily was it met half-way by the tacit or expressed assent of almost all classes and parties :—

<sup>1</sup> In a volume entitled *Voyage d'un Allemand à Paris, et Retour par la Suisse*, the writer, a warm friend of the Revolution, travelling in France in 1798, remarks with sorrow that any one who witnessed the ostentatious parade of military force at public fêtes, the domineering attitude assumed by the soldiers towards the citizens, and the rudeness with which they thrust them aside on all occasions, would be constrained to acknowledge that never had less consideration been shown the people in royal fêtes under the old régime than was shown them now. It was the era of a new régime of Cæsarism.

He was of slender make, with thin face, thin lips, sunken cheeks, large eyes, long and lank hair. Quick and abrupt in all his movements, in conversation his questions pressed uninterruptedly one upon another. Without much of regularly acquired knowledge on general subjects, he showed an intelligent interest in everything, and his own manner of speech, if never much affecting beauty of form, was always marked by aptness and originality of expression. In every interview he manifested, that half-negligent half-confident security which sprang from conscious superiority to his interlocutors in strength of character or position, in possession or prospect. That he should one day grasp the sovereign power in France was a point so settled in his mind, that he had leisure to consider the question *when* and *how* with perfectly cool composure.

The observation here offers itself, that not a single important enterprise of the Consulate or Empire but may be traced back to the early youthful projects of the born world-conqueror. It is striking to remark how little is evinced of progressive development in the mighty career which bears the name of Napoleon Bonaparte. It was not two years, at the epoch before us, since he had first come out from comparative obscurity on the great theatre of the world's affairs, and already everything which he afterwards carried into effect at the meridian of his power had shaped itself out completely in his mind—the internal constitution of the French Empire in embryo—the imperial dominion over Italy, the subjection of the Pope, the subjugation of the Spanish peninsula—the vassalage of Germany to France, with the means applicable to achieve it—the excommunication of England from Europe—afterwards attempted by the continental system. He did not strike out a single new idea in subsequent years; his whole course of government was nothing but the realising in action of the ideas he had first formed in his youth. And in like manner as the political views and projects, had the individual spirit and character of the man himself already come to complete maturity in his twenty-eighth year. From his first day of command, his matchless military talent displayed itself in its full and complete development, and not less the consummate statecraft—the remorseless perfidy—the insatiable egoism—the demonic charm of personal intercourse and influence. In no one point was there any sign of growth in subsequent years.

He grew indeed more corpulent and more communicative, but the sole internal change traceable in him was a change for the worse. The formerly marvellous equilibrium between imagination and intellect, between caution and hardihood, between passion and calculation, became more and more dangerously disturbed and shaken by



every new success. It would seem as though he had risen from his cradle a world-conqueror, as Pallas sprang forth in complete panoply from the head of Zeus.'

The question has been sometimes—in our humble judgment, somewhat idly—raised: Might not the first Napoleon have played the patriotic part of a Washington, and set constitutional liberty again on its legs, instead of trampling it in the dust? This seems a question which may best be answered by another: What was there in the qualities which enabled the first Napoleon to seize absolute power in France that could dispose him to surrender it, and restore political liberties into hands which had already proved themselves unable to preserve or use them? And had he even been so disposed, what was there in the character of his chief constituents—the military—that could dispose *them* to render their services for any such disinterested purpose? In the political chaos of Revolution the armies alone had developed a power of permanent practical organisation and action. They alone had saved France from the worst consequences of anarchy—national dissolution and dismemberment. But they had saved France as armies are apt to save nations, that is to say, by bringing her under the undisguised yoke of military despotism. 'Napoleon,' says the late M. Lanfrey, 'was assured beforehand of the support of the military, because his elevation was the sure pledge of their own influence in the State.' The soldiery had twice already been used, not without Napoleon's aid and incitement, to crush popular or parliamentary resistance to an ex-Jacobin Directory. When Napoleon, in Brumaire, proceeded to use them a third time on his own account, he implicitly bound himself to redeem the pledge his elevation gave them. How should he have redeemed that pledge by taking as his motto *Cedant arma togæ*? Or where should he have found a determining motive for any such cession in his own military ideas of the essential bases of governing power? '*En dernière analyse*,' he himself said at St. Helena, '*on ne gouverne qu'avec des éperons et des bottes*.' And this was undoubtedly true at the epoch at which

he undertook to govern—to govern on the sole title of military ability to command military obedience.

That, when the first Napoleon seized the sceptre of France, she had fallen into a condition in which despotism itself seemed a blessed rescue from social and political disorganisation, admitted at the time no question, unless from the surviving sectaries of that *anarchy on system* which France in reality had to thank for her Cæsar. Injustice and violence, on whatever pretexts perpetrated, can but inaugurate, not an age of gold, but an age of iron. After the ravages made by Jacobinism in her whole social and political condition, no régime but sword-rule could impose restraint on the conflicting passions still animating the late holders and the late victims of lawless power.

To form a perfectly just estimate of the character and policy of the first Napoleon, it never should be forgotten that he had climbed to power over the heads of able and ambitious rivals by the result of a sort of competitive examination of personal capabilities for empire, informally instituted by military and popular opinion. He must not be judged by the same standard as a ruler whose title is undisputed, whose tenure of power traditional. He was a political Blondin, whose nerves and brain were at all times tasked to their uttermost to preserve a 'tremulous and dancing balance' on his narrow though lofty foothold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Jackson, younger brother of our resident Minister at Paris at the epoch of the Peace of Amiens—in the first flush of the military and political autocracy of the first Napoleon—writing home, retails as follows what his brother told him of the position and supposed policy of the First Consul:—

'He (the elder official brother) said the First Consul had made the replacing of the country in a state of peace, after a successful war, an object of the first importance to him. He believed he would persevere in it. Still, allowing him all possible credit for sincerity, his views, he considers, are subject to contingencies which do not depend altogether either upon him or the Powers with whom he is treating. His generals are dissatisfied with what is going on at Amiens, and desire war that they may enrich themselves by plunder. General Massena has openly boasted of the ease with which he could have effected the invasion of England, and considers his career of victory and glory cut short by the negotiations for peace. If Bonaparte does not find himself strong enough to overcome these plotters and intriguers, it is my brother's opinion that he will, to preserve his own position, gratify his generals, and once more plunge the country in war.'—*Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson*, vol. i. p. 33.

Madame de Rémusat is not the first distinguished Frenchwoman who has bequeathed to posterity a woman's estimate of Napoleon. The first impulse, in fact, to the composition of her Memoirs was given by the unlooked-for appearance of Madame de Staël's posthumously published work 'entitled *'Considérations sur la Révolution Française.'* 'What especially struck my grandmother in that work,' says M. Paul de Rémusat, 'was the vehement pages in which the author gave vent to her somewhat declamatory animosity against Napoleon.' Writing to her son, the late eminent French academician and father of the present editor of her Memoirs, 'I was bitten,' Madame de Rémusat said, 'by the desire to speak again about Bonaparte. Behold me therefore sitting down at six o'clock in the morning to relate the death of the Duke d'Enghien—that terrible week I passed at the Malmaison. After a few lines, as I am an emotional person, I feel transported back again to those times; the words and deeds I have witnessed seem to recur to my mind as though of themselves.'

'An observation which I had occasion to make about this time,' says Madame de Rémusat, speaking of her first years of court service as *dame du palais* under the Empress Josephine, 'and which a good deal amused me, was that the *ci-devant* great lords, whatever difference there might be in their characters, all alike experienced, on coming to this court, a sort of disappointment which was curious enough to notice.

On their first appearance, finding themselves again breathing palace air, again moving in the sphere of court etiquette, and resuming the old modes of speech current in royal residences, they gave way rather precipitately to the illusion, and fancied they could bring back into vogue the same ways of speaking and acting to which they had accustomed themselves in the same palaces, where nothing appeared changed but the master. Very soon, however, a severe word, an abrupt expression of absolute will, suddenly and harshly warned them that everything in the new court was placed on a new footing. It was then a sight worth seeing, how, put out as they found themselves in all their wonted frivolous modes of being, finding, as it were, the ground give way under their feet, they lost all

*aplomb*, despite their efforts. Too vain or too weak to assume a gravity foreign to all their antecedents, they no longer knew what air to take or what language to hold.

If it was a part of Napoleon's policy to restore the etiquettes, it was not in his nature or culture to restore the manners of the old régime. This defect was conspicuous in his habitually rough way of addressing women. 'Almost always,' says Madame de Rémusat, 'his first question, whether to men or women, was "What is your name?" and every woman he spoke to rejoiced when he moved away from her neighbourhood.'

The first Napoleon's general demeanour towards women was habitually cynical, and sometimes capable of becoming exceptionally rude. Not to mention his little war of police proscription against Madame de Staël, or his unchivalrous insults to the interesting and unfortunate Queen Louisa of Prussia, he was habitually uncivil without intention—or intentionally so without motive—even to ladies whose ornamental presence he wished to attract to his court. It was as ornaments indeed he wanted them, and as nothing else. Even high-born dames, whose titles of old nobility were Napoleon's sole motive for cajoling them into his court service—such, for instance, as Madame de Chevreuse—had to endure his 'short and shocking' apostrophes; or if, like her, they had spirit, were now and again provoked to reprisals. Madame de Chevreuse, it seems, though pretty, had red hair, and Napoleon twitted her with it. 'C'est possible,' she replied, 'mais aucun homme ne me l'avait encore dit.'

'Bonaparte,' says Madame de Rémusat (he is always *Bonaparte* with her from first to last), 'often repeated "Il faut que les femmes ne soient rien à ma cour; elles ne m'aimeront point, mais j'y gagnerai du repos."' And she added, '*Il tint parole.*'

Whether indeed with men or women at his court, Napoleon's was an attitude of 'no confidence.' He was ever on the watch to repel encroachment or detect treachery. Like the once noted tamer of wild beasts, Van Amburg, as depicted

by Landseer, he was always on his guard against the moment when—if they would not turn and rend him—they would at any rate, in vulgar parlance, get on his back. ‘I had risen from the crowd,’ he said to Las Cases at St. Helena; ‘it was a matter of necessity for me to establish an etiquette; otherwise I should have been slapped every day on the shoulder.’

Amongst the most curious and amusing passages in Madame de Rémusat’s *Memoirs* is the description of Napoleon’s court at Fontainebleau in the early autumn of 1807. At that epoch his ascendancy in Europe had reached its zenith. His short but murderous first struggle with Russia in the snows and swamps of Poland had terminated in the triumphant treaty of Tilsit, and the sudden embrace and reconcilment of the Imperial Peachum and Lockit. Every subjugated nation had been taxed in its best blood to furnish recruits for the grand army of universal conquest. Spaniards had been marched through France to fight Russians on the Vistula. Now came a parade of peace, a courtly assemblage of conquered princes to swell their conqueror’s triumph, and obey his sovereign command to *amuse themselves*.

‘All those foreign grandees,’ says Madame de Rémusat, ‘drawn together at Fontainebleau—all more or less humiliated and despoiled—came to seek favour or justice. All knew that their destiny was being decided in silence in some cabinet of the chateau where they were then met; all had to assume the like countenance and affect the like unconcern; to hunt, dance, or do anything else they were asked. Nothing else was asked of them but to do anything whatever that should save the master the necessity of giving them a formal audience or answer. There were fixed days for hunting, and it came into the Emperor’s head to invent a *costume de chasse* for the ladies. Each of the princesses had her own distinguishing colours for herself and her household. The Empress’s colours were amaranth with gold embroidery, with a cap embroidered in like manner, and white plumes. The Queen of Holland chose blue and silver, Madame Murat rose colour and silver also, Princess Borghese lilac embroidered with silver. The Emperor and the men of his court were in green uniform with gold and silver lace. These brilliant costumes had a charming effect, glancing in all directions through the fine forest of Fontainebleau.

The Emperor liked hunting rather for the sake of exercise than the sport in itself. He did not always trouble himself much about

following the stag, but often forgot the motive which had led him to ride through the forest, and let his horse carry him which way it would, while he gave himself up to rather protracted reveries. He had falls now and then, of which nothing was ever said in his presence, as that would have displeased him. He sometimes took a fancy for driving, but it was not very safe to ride with him when he drove, as he took no precautions for turning corners or avoiding obstacles. Once at Saint-Cloud he took it in his head to drive four-in-hand, when his horses ran away with him almost at first starting, and in passing through a gate he upset the carriage with the Empress in it, and other persons—himself coming off with no worse consequence than a sprained wrist. From that time forward he gave up the freak of charioteering, saying, everyone, in small or great things, should stick to his own trade.'

It is curious that a very similar freak of Cromwell is recorded as follows, from contemporary sources, in Lingard's 'History of England':—

'About this time an extraordinary accident occurred. Among the presents which Cromwell had received from foreign princes were six Friesland coach-horses from the Duke of Oldenburg. One day, after he had dined with Thurloe under the shade of the park, the fancy took him to try the mettle of the horses. The secretary was compelled to enter the carriage: the Protector, forgetful of his station, mounted the box. The horses at first appeared obedient to the hand of the new coachman; but the too frequent application of the lash drove them into a gallop, and the Protector was suddenly precipitated from his seat. At first, he lay suspended by the pole with his leg entangled in the harness; and the explosion of a loaded pistol in one of his pockets added to the fright and the rapidity of the horses; but a fortunate jerk extricated his foot from the shoe, and he fell under the body of the carriage without meeting with injury from the wheels. He was immediately taken up by his guards, who followed at full speed, and conveyed to Whitehall. Thurloe leaped from the door of the carriage, and escaped with a sprained ankle and some severe bruises. Both were confined to their chambers for a long time. The cavaliers diverted themselves by prophesying that, as his

first fall had been from a *coach*, the next would be from a *cart*.'

Not perhaps the least characteristic chapter of Napoleon's personal history is that which may be called the scandalous chronicle of his amours. Madame de Kémusat says that were she not well assured that, during her lifetime at least, certain details would meet no eye but her son's, she would not trust them to paper. Certainly they illustrate what she calls the *sauvage galanterie* of Napoleon's ways with women. We shall not seek (after the lapse of two-thirds of a century, it would be very little worth while to do so) to lift the discreet veil of initials from the names of the ladies whom Napoleon honoured with his attentions. One incident, however, may be singled out from his other transient liaisons, because it commenced a more permanent connection and touched more important interests.

'During his first campaign in Poland,' says our memoir writer, 'Murat, who had preceded him to Warsaw, received orders to "look out for him a young and pretty woman against his arrival there, by preference from amongst the nobles." Murat adroitly executed his commission, and found the requisite qualities and the requisite complaisance in the person of a young and noble Polish lady married to an old husband. The fair dame's arrival, rather late at night, was duly announced to the Emperor at a château near Warsaw where he had taken up his quarters. He contented himself with giving orders for her accommodation, and went on working with his papers. When he had quite finished he presented himself *en maître* in the apartment where he had been long waited for, and without wasting a moment on useless courtesies opened a long conversation with the young lady on the political situation of Poland, putting just such questions as he might have put to a sharp police agent, and expecting in reply the most circumstantial details about all the great Polish nobles then at Warsaw, their opinions, interests, and so forth, and carrying on these curious interrogatories at great length. The astonishment of a young woman of twenty, not in the least prepared for such a *début*,

may be imagined. She replied on all points to the best of her ability, and not till she had got to the end of her answers Napoleon seemed to remember that Murat had engaged for him that he should say a few words of softer import.'

Napoleon's singular style of gallantry did not prevent the young lady from attaching herself to him.

'She afterwards,' says Madame de Rémusat, 'came to Paris, and had a son on whom many of the Poles fixed their hopes as the future founder in Poland of one more Napoleonic dynasty.' 'I have seen,' says Madame de Rémusat, 'the mother presented at the Imperial court, at first exciting the jealousy of Josephine, with whom, after her divorce, she became rather intimate, and often brought her son to visit her at the Malmaison. It is said that she remained faithful to the Emperor on the fall of his fortunes, and visited him more than once in his first exile.'

The anonymous author of a pleasant little volume entitled *The Island Empire*, published in 1855; relates some circumstances of the visit (presumably) of this lady to Elba, and mentions the odd *qui-pro-quo* to which it gave occasion among some of Napoleon's followers in that island.

'In all the memoirs of the Emperor,' says the above-cited author, 'it has been stated that, during his sojourn at Elba, a lady with a child came to the island for a short time, who was supposed by the islanders to be the Empress [Marie Louise], but by persons better informed to have been another lady, whose personal attractions and accomplishments had some time before fascinated him. In the beginning of August 1814, a Genoese felucca, the interior of which was fitted up in a luxurious manner, arrived at Porto Ferrajo, bringing a lady, a little boy, and a Polish or German colonel, whose name does not transpire. In the course of the day of their arrival, the Emperor, accompanied by General Bertrand, Captain Baillon, and my informant, started on horseback, as though for San Martino. Arrived at the cross-road where the two roads to San Martino and Marciana branch off, the Emperor, continuing his route to the former place with General Bertrand, ordered his other two followers to wait at this spot for a carriage that would soon pass, and to desire the coachman not to proceed further till his Majesty's return. On his leaving, Captain Baillon said to his companion, 'Voilà, nous avons l'Impératrice à l'île d'Elbe.'



The occupants of the carriage had not to wait long for the Emperor to join them, who, on riding up, entered the carriage, while General Bertrand was observed to speak to the lady with marks of extraordinary respect. On arriving at Procchio the party took boat, and proceeded to Marciana Marina, whence they proceeded to the Madonna, where tents were provided for their accommodation. The following day, as the child was playing about under the chestnut-trees, the Emperor came up to Doctor Fourreau, who was in conversation with the Captain, and asked him what he thought of the child. The Doctor answered, '*He appears to be much grown since I had the honour of seeing him at Fontainebleau.*' His answer was evidently displeasing to the Emperor, who answered abruptly, "*Qu'est ce que vous chantez donc ?*" and turned away, leaving the poor Doctor almost in tears, and in a state only to be understood by those attendants who unfortunately fell under their master's displeasure. The Emperor, seeing that the Captain had observed that the child called him 'Papa,' asked him what the Elbans thought of his visitors. The Captain answered, 'They think that Elba is honoured with the presence of the Empress and of your Majesty's son.' On which the Emperor rejoined, 'He may well be my son, and yet not the King of Rome.'

This Polish mystery may be said to have since come under the category of 'secrets known to all the world.'

## IX.

MONSIEUR GUIZOT'S 'OWN TIME.'<sup>1</sup>

*Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Mon Temps.* Par M. Guizot. Tomes I.-VIII. Paris, 1858-1867.

MONSIEUR GUIZOT's memory of things and persons goes back to times whither few surviving contemporaries are left to follow it—from his first introduction to society and to bureaucracy in the latter days of the Empire—through all the earlier vicissitudes and later fatalities of the elder Bourbon restoration and the perturbed politics, *quorum pars magna fuit*, of the younger dynasty dethroned in turn. He notes a trait of constant recurrence in French life and character, and which yet, at every epoch of its recurrence, is always a sort of surprise. The lull of politics, and the social fusion for the time being of all the *élite* of all parties, which had taken place under the strong compression of the government of the first Napoleon, had encouraged hopes which, when that compression was removed by his fall, soon proved fallacious, that the truce which had been enforced on party passions by an absolute government would be observed longer than the time when the liberty to give them again their swing was restored. M. Guizot describes as follows the sort of 'truce of God' that had suspended party conflicts in France during the years which intervened between the revolutionary troubles in which the last century had closed, and the reopening of the political arena by the restoration of chartered royalty :—

I was living in the midst of a thoroughly French society—more strongly impregnated perhaps than any other with the national taste and spirit. I witnessed there precisely that sort of *rapprochement*,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Fortnightly Review*, May 1866, September 1867.

harmony, and fusion of different classes, and even of different parties, which appeared to me to supply an essential condition of the stability of the new and free *régime* which was to succeed. Men of all ranks, all professions, nay, all opinions—men of the old *noblesse*, magistrates, lawyers, ecclesiastics, men of letters, and men of business—men of the *ancien régime*, of the Constituent Assembly, of the Convention, and of the Empire, were living at that time in easy and amicable relations, mutually recognising, without constraint or effort, their differences of position or views, and apparently disposed to a good understanding with each other on the affairs of their common country. Strange contradiction in French manners! So long as no other relations are in question than those formed for the pleasures of literary and social intercourse, all class distinctions, all party struggles, are suspended; we all think only of throwing our merits and accomplishments into the common stock of enjoyment. But only let political questions come up again, and the positive interests of life connected with them—only let the question come to be, not of joining in social meetings devoted to mere pleasure and amusement, but of claiming each his part in the rights, affairs, honours, advantages, and burthens of the body politic, on the instant all the suppressed differences reappear—all the pretensions, all the stubborn prepossessions, all the susceptibilities, all the struggles, recommence; and the same society which had seemed so harmonious and so united, shows itself at once not less diverse and not less divided than it had ever been.

This unfortunate incoherence between the apparent and real state of French society suddenly revealed itself in 1815. The reaction provoked by the Hundred Days [Napoleon's return from Elba] destroyed in a moment the whole work of social pacification which had been going on in France for sixteen years, and produced a sudden explosion of all the passions, good or bad, of the *ancien régime*, against all results, good or bad, of the Revolution. (Vol. i. p. 111.)

If the Consulate and Empire of the first Napoleon had effected a sixteen years' suspension of the political passions and conflicts of the ten revolutionary years preceding, on the other hand, his prolonged military dictatorship had equally arrested all acquirement of political experience during the same period. It has often been thrown in the teeth of the men of the old *régime* who took subsequent part in politics, that, since its downfall, they had forgotten nothing and learned nothing. But the same thing exactly might have

been said, with equal truth, of the men of the Revolution, and of the new generation who sat at their feet and handed down their traditions. There had been no school of public life open in France for sixteen years where either Royalists or Revolutionists could have learned, or could have learned to forget, anything. Accordingly the first use the former made of their temporarily restored ascendancy was to domineer; the first use the latter made of their newly-restored liberties was to conspire. Neither had an idea of anything like a spirit of concession, self-moderation, or self-restraint in politics. While the Royalists remained uppermost, their language and attitude, rather than any overt acts, provoked revolt; whenever the Liberals got a chance they revolted. Neither knew how to use parliamentary government for its proper purpose; both justified, in turn, Mallet Du Pan's sentence in a letter addressed to Count Saint-Aldegonde in 1797:—'Une grande assemblée délibérative en France ne sera jamais qu'une pétaudière ou un brûlot.'

The worst enemies of the permanent power of the Royalist party in France were in its own ranks; and the most fatal blows which were struck at that power, when it seemed consolidated, were struck by its own malcontent members. Of these, the most conspicuous and the most formidable was Chateaubriand, whose writings attracted M. Guizot's early admiration, as that of young France generally under the First Empire, and whose eccentric character and career he has traced with justice, and not without sympathy:—

The situation of M. de Chateaubriand at Ghent [during the refuge taken by Louis XVIII.'s little court there in 1815] was singular. He was a member of the Royal Council; he put forth brilliant expositions of its policy in official documents, and defended it with not less *éclat* in the "Moniteur de Gand." He was, nevertheless, in a very bad humour with everybody, and nobody paid much personal attention to him. In my opinion, neither the King nor his successive governments at that time, nor afterwards, rightly understood M. de Chateaubriand's character, nor estimated at a high enough rate the importance of his concurrence or hostility. I am ready to admit he was a most inconvenient ally, for he had pretensions to everything, and took offence at everything. , With just claims to stand on an equal

footing with men of the rarest talent and highest genius, his delusion was to imagine himself also the equal of the greatest masters in the art of government; his heart was full of bitterness when he was not recognised as the rival of Napoleon as well as of Milton. Practical politicians would not humour this self-idolatry, but they did not take sufficient account of the qualities of the man, whether as friend or as enemy. It might have been possible to satisfy him by tributes to his genius and sops to his vanity; or if it was not possible to satisfy him, it should, at all events, have been felt necessary, from motives of prudence as well as of gratitude, not merely to soothe his jealous susceptibilities, but to load him with favours. He was one of those towards whom ingratitude is not less dangerous than unjust, since they resent it passionately, and know how to revenge their felt or fancied wrongs, without incurring the imputation of betrayal of their party or desertion of their professed principles. (Vol. i. p. 88.)

Chateaubriand's early youth, passed between a dilapidated feudal château and a remote Breton college, the vagabondage of his early manhood in both hemispheres, in forest and camp, under the storm and stress of those years of revolution in its first period, which drove all aristocratic and almost all French life from its moorings—brought to maturity whatever was original, peculiar, and Quixotic—sometimes *pseudo-Quixotic*—in his genius and character, and rendered him, like Rousseau, eminently self-concentrated, self-conceited, and unsociable. Like Rousseau, Chateaubriand early conceived the idea of 'Confessions,' but, unlike Rousseau, he declared he should not take the world into the confidence of the weak or sore places of his soul and life. He has, however, done so, whether in writing of himself or others. There is a curious contrast—to the advantage indeed of Chateaubriand's originality of thought and play of fancy, but to the advantage also of M. Guizot's better regulated mind, self-judgment, and judgment of others—between the 'Mémoires d'Outre-Tombé,' and M. Guizot's 'Mémoires de Mon Temps.' It is impossible to deny that, with all Chateaubriand's conceits and affectations, with all the distortions, more or less conscious as it may be, of action and character, caused by the disturbing force of his own ever-present personality, its pretensions and resentments, his autobiography has a power

of description and vividness of colouring of the chequered life of his times, which it would be vain to seek in M. Guizot's. On the other hand, no one would take on trust Chateaubriand's estimates of the acts or characters of any of his contemporaries, without first examining at what points, real or fantastic, they had come in contact with himself. He could not see the Fête-Dieu celebrated at Lyons in 1803, without referring the re-établissement of Christianity in France to his 'Génie du Christianisme.' 'Je croyais avoir quelque part à ces bouquets de fleurs, à cette joie du ciel *que j'avais rappelée sur la terre.*' It is, however, quite true that Chateaubriand possessed a peculiar faculty—partly due to his vivid imagination, partly, it must in justice be owned, to the element of fearless independence in his character, and his habitual disregard of interested considerations of the lower sort—for doing, at critical epochs, what Madame de Staël termed, 'un devoir qui nous distingue,' and striking what might sometimes almost be termed literary and rhetorical *coups d'état*. His public life was a series of conspicuous, not to say ostentatious, sacrifices to a cause and principle which he takes care to tell us were not those of his rational and interior conviction. He did life-long battle, as he affirms, for Church and Crown, from a point of honour not very intelligible in its origin or obligation; but his real and intimate faith was in his own divine right to unceasing incense. This the human race will not pay long to anyone; and Chateaubriand sought refuge for his unsatisfied vanity in the profession of *ennui* of everything—as Rousseau had in suicide. In politics, with which our concern is at present, his insociability made opposition his natural element. By his own acknowledgment, he would act alone, or would not act at all. When Napoleon, always in quest of talent that might be made serviceable, first appointed him Secretary of Legation at Rome on the strength of his 'Génie du Christianisme,' he says naïvely, 'I was by no means convinced that I could be useful in the place I was called to fill—I am good for nothing at all in the second rank.' Presently, Napoleon, then First Consul, made him Minister in the Valais—no very important

mission. 'He had come to perceive,' says Chateaubriand, 'that I was of that race which is only good for anything when placed in the first line—that I must not be joined or mixed with anyone, or no good would ever be got out of me.'

Chateaubriand had, or rather took, an opportunity, under the Bourbon Restoration, for that isolated action for which his genius, he conceived, was fitted. As envoy from the Villèle Cabinet to the Congress of Holy Allies at Verona, in 1823, he contrived to force the hand of a reluctant minister and a no less reluctant monarch (Louis XVIII.) into the impolitic, though successful, Spanish war of that year, in which France really made herself the cat's-paw of the Holy Alliance to extract the chestnuts of Spanish absolutism from the fire of revolution. Chateaubriand always claimed the war of 1823 as *his* Spanish war, and certainly, whether as ambassador at Verona, or afterwards as Foreign Minister, he was the one Frenchman who had the best right to claim a voluntary initiative in putting through that monarchical European work. But as he found no special laurel-wreath placed on his brow for it by king, minister, or public—as he found, or fancied, himself slighted at court on his first appearance there, when his war policy had triumphed—he was thrown back on his old natural proclivity to secession and opposition, and took the first opportunity, not a very decent opportunity, of indulging it.

Nothing is of more common observation in politics than to find the first fatal shock often given to the power of parties, nay, even to dynasties, by some apparently petty cause. It may seem absurd when stated, but it is true, that the government, first of the elder, and afterwards of the younger Bourbon dynasty, got the first serious shake by a sudden split in the ranks of their natural supporters on a question which would have seemed so inadequate to such issues as the reduction of the French Five per Cents. ! That question caused the abrupt expulsion of Chateaubriand from the Villèle Cabinet in 1824; the wayward Foreign Minister, disgusted that no *Te Deums* were sung to him as the author

and finisher of *his* Spanish war, having wrapt himself up in sullen silence in the Chamber of Peers on that ministerial measure, and having spread, as it was suspected, or detected, *ambiguas voces* about it among the many malcontents—principally Parisian fundholders—against it out of doors. Retired to his natural rôle of opposition, Chateaubriand became the most formidable member of that opposition, in the Royalist ranks themselves, which succeeded in overthrowing a moderate Royalist government (that of M. de Villèle), and creating such difficulties for 'the king's government' in any hands, that a monarch of weak mind and strong prejudice cut them short at last by the Polignac Ministry and the ordonnances, which sent the elder Bourbons a third time into exile.

Twelve years later, in 1836, the same Five per Cent. question came up again under Louis Philippe's Government, on the unauthorised initiative of the then Minister of Finance, M. Humann. The effect was still more immediate in overthrowing a ministry, and scarcely less permanently injurious to the stability of the new dynasty than it had been to the old, since it produced the first schism between the more and the less popular sections of what might be termed the governmental party under the House of Orleans—a schism which came to a head in the successful parliamentary coalition in which M. Guizot, not very consistently with his austere Conservatism, took an active part, against the Môle Ministry, in 1837–1839. M. Guizot has placed on record a conversation he had with M. Bertin de Vaux, long the proprietor of that highly influential newspaper, the '*Journal des Débats*.' In 1824, M. Bertin de Vaux had called on the Prime Minister, M. de Villèle, to get him to make peace with Chateaubriand, after his abrupt dismissal, by giving him the embassy to Rome. On his refusal, the journalist threatened the minister that he would upset his Government, as he had done preceding ones; and, with Chateaubriand's energetic collaboration, in the end he kept his word. But the overthrow of the Villèle Ministry drew after it ultimately that of the elder Bourbon dynasty, which neither Chateaubriand nor Bertin



de Vaux had deliberately wished to accomplish. Accordingly, when Guizot, Thiers, and the *Côté Gauche* declared open war on the Môle Ministry, M. Bertin de Vaux frankly said to M. Guizot, 'I feel assuredly as much friendship for you as I ever did for Chateaubriand; but the 'Débats' shall not follow you into opposition. I will not set to work a second time to undermine a government of which I wish to promote the permanence and stability. Once has been once too often.'

It is a circumstance more significant than edifying, as a trait of character, that King Louis Philippe—who, as M. Guizot tells us, was vehemently opposed to the measure above referred to, for reimbursing the principal or reducing the interest of the Five per Cents., "which he regarded," says our memorialist, "as unjust in itself, injurious to his Government, inconsistent with public faith, and even questionable in legality"—was himself a habitual purchaser, with the annual savings from the portion of his civil list appropriated to his own personal expenditure, of small amounts of Five per Cent. stock. This M. Guizot does not tell us, but we are told it by an authentic publication which was made soon after the February Revolution, under the title of 'Revue Retrospective,' of all the documents, whether of a public or private nature, found in the palaces and bureaux of the Orleans dynasty, which appeared to bear in any manner on the character and policy of that dynasty. Few houses, royal or unroyal, have been subjected to such sudden and ruthless revelations—few perhaps would have stood such with less serious damage. But certainly this habit of investing small savings in the Five per Cents. seems partly to explain—as M. Taschereau, the editor of the 'Revue Retrospective,' observed at the time—the vehement opposition of the great fundholder at the Tuileries to the sound financial measure of reimbursement or reduction of the Five per Cents.

There is nothing very astonishing in this little trait of fellow-feeling between the Citizen King and his *bourgeois* brother-holders of Five per Cent. stock. What may seem more so is the facile complaisance shown towards that feeling by the Citizen King's Ministry of 1836, headed by the

Doctrinaire Duke de Broglie, and of which the Doctrinaire M. Guizot was a subordinate member. Those ministers thought the measure in question just, legal, and expedient. They were backed—nay, pushed to its adoption—by a majority of the Chamber of Deputies. And yet, apparently in deference to the *pensée immuable* of fund-holding royalty, they threw their too honest Chancellor of the Exchequer overboard, and were themselves—by a poetical justice one can't help chuckling over, even at this distance of time—overthrown by a vote of the Chamber of Deputies, insisting, and rightly insisting, on some distinct pledge for at least the future adoption of a measure admitted to be just in principle, and deemed urgent in practice to cut short the course of that dynasty of deficits then just opening. M. Guizot laments that the Louis Philippist majority never again recovered that force of cohesion in all its sections which it lost—as the Royalist Restoration majority had lost before—by a pitiful Five per Cent. schism. Pitiful enough, certainly; but to an English eye the weak point in French politics at either epoch was not what M. Guizot thinks, the undue stress laid on a mere matter of honest finance and sound public economy, but, on the contrary, the carelessness of public economy, which maintained predominance, and the postponement of a clear practical public interest to party passion, petty class interests, or royal influence—unavowed, but not undetected.

There is sometimes a succession of untoward incidents in public affairs which bears an aspect of little less than fatality, and seems to recur more markedly in French politics than in any other, from the epoch of the diamond necklace downward. Such a 'run of ill luck' befell the Orleans dynasty in the last months of its existence, and laid it open to a malignity of attack and aspersion almost without precedent. M. Guizot makes a clean breast, in his last volume, of some jobs of which he confesses himself to have been cognisant—some little private bargains between friends for purchase and sale of the 'tenant-right' of certain places. M. Guizot also records some graver scandals of official malversation,

which, as soon as detected, his Government handed over to public justice. All, however, helped to heap odium on an already unpopular Ministry. Aristides the Just himself would have fatigued the French Demos had he enjoyed, like M. Guizot, an eight years' lease of power; and it was a god-send to have colourable pleas afforded from any quarter for ostracising that 'austère intrigant,' as his enemies termed him. There was grave menace for the monarchy—sentence of death for the Ministry, could Louis Philippe have read it right—in the standing toast at the political banquets of 1847—“*A la probité politique !*”

We have now for the first time before us, in authentic detail, the incidents which immediately preceded and prompted the sudden change of Ministry made by Louis Philippe under stress of street riot on the 23rd of February 1848. M. Guizot states with more distinctness, as well as with more authority, than had been done before, the covert or pronounced\* hostility which had gathered about his Ministry in court circles, and in the royal family itself, in the course of 1847, when the crowded opposition banquets held throughout the country had testified to the unpopularity of the Government, and culminated in that project of a final banquet in Paris which produced the fatal explosion. Under these circumstances of formidable hostility out of doors to his Cabinet and policy, and hardly less formidable mistrust in-doors, M. Guizot tells us, and we give full credit to his account, that he thought it his duty to lay before King Louis Philippe, on the eve of the opening of the Chambers, where the Guizot Ministry still commanded an assured majority, the alternatives which the political situation offered, and the readiness of the Cabinet to give way to a change of councillors. “If a ministerial crisis”—the minister wisely and honestly said to the Monarch—“must come, it is better, infinitely better, that the question should be settled before the meeting of the Chambers. To-day the King may change his Cabinet as a measure of prudence—the struggle once commenced, the change would take place under the stress of necessity.” The King replied by declaring his firm resolu-

tion to support his Ministers against all assaults and all demonstrations, unless such as should be backed by a parliamentary majority. Few weeks had passed before he abruptly dismissed that Ministry on the first alarm of a portion of the National Guard showing itself on the malcontent side, and joining in cries of "*Vive la Réforme!*" A week or two earlier, the dismissal of an unpopular Ministry might probably have saved his throne. His surrender of the executive government to a movement of the Paris populace overthrew it. When M. Guizot announced the retirement of his Cabinet in the Chamber of Deputies, he tells us that an opposition member, M. Calmon, slapped M. Muret de Bord, a zealous Ministerialist, on the shoulder, saying, "Citizen Muret de Bord, tell Citizeness Muret de Bord to pack up—the Republic won't be too fond of *you*." At the same sitting, another opposition member, M. Jules de Lasteyrie, said to M. Duchatel, ex-Home Minister, "I earnestly desired to see the fall of the Cabinet, but I had rather have seen you stay in ten years longer than go out by that door."

The remoter causes of the overthrow of a dynasty which has fallen under internal enemies only, must, of course, have been more important than the mere accidents which immediately preceded it. But M. Guizot's disclosures of the last days and hours of his Ministry, and of middle-class monarchy in France, show that the main proximate cause at least of that overthrow was a peculiarity in his late master's character, noticed by him in his previous volumes, which rendered Louis Philippe's strongest opinions and firmest resolutions liable to be shaken by sudden impressions from unforeseen incidents. What he had seen of revolution, and suffered from revolutionary violence in his long career, while, on the one hand, rendering him very decided in his attitude of resistance to all movements which he regarded as pointing in that direction, had rendered him, on the other hand, somewhat over-ready, at critical moments, to yield to popular violence, or the sudden impression and apprehension of it, more than could reasonably be demanded or prudently

conceded. A remarkable trait of this kind is related by M. Guizot in his second volume (p. 173):—

Two days after the sacking of St. Germain l'Auxerrois (1831), M. Laffitte [at that time Prime Minister], in one of his sudden accesses of deference to demagogic passions, came to ask the King to change the arms of France, and strike the *fleurs-de-lis* out of them. The King yielded to this demand, not thinking himself in a position to resist it. I believe that, in this sorry circumstance, he mistook his course, and to this tyrannical proscription by the revolutionary spirit of the armorial bearings of his house he might have said *no*—at some risk doubtless, but not at great risk to his throne or person.'

A little of our George III.'s insensibility to imminent danger—a little, perhaps, of his dulness of political vision—might have done Louis Philippe better service at some critical moments than his own quicker sense and wider views. The former monarch had an undoubting and unfear- ing faith in himself as chief hereditary representative of national right and power, with which he laboured, with im- perfect success, to inspire his trusted advisers, and which was alike proof to revolt in America, hostile leagues in Europe, menace of invasion from France, Protestant com- bustion of London, and armed independence of Ireland. Louis Philippe was quite as persuaded as George III. that his personal policy was fighting the battle of all right-think- ing persons and substantial householders, but he had not that royal or imperial faith in himself, his function and mission, which sometimes maintains a monarchy and some- times erects an empire. Neither had he that other quality, rarer still, and possessed so eminently by the late King Leopold of Belgium, of exercising real power while avoiding all personal assertion or ostentation of it—throwing, as it were, the reins on the necks of parties, letting them fight out their fight for power and office in the open parliamentary arena, and find out a need of arbitrament not prematurely thrust on them. Louis Philippe, according to M. Guizot, was always afraid lest people should not give him credit for his personal share in the policy pursued under his Govern-

ment. He got only too much credit given him for that policy.

'Indifference and silence,' says his ex-Minister, 'are often very useful and suitable royal habits. King Louis Philippe did not sufficiently cultivate these. He was besides so profoundly convinced of the wisdom of his own policy, and of the importance for the good of his country of his success, that he grudged to see the merit of his measures ascribed to others; and could not be content without vindicating his full share in them. This natural enough [unkingly enough] desire on his part, and the inexhaustible fertility and vivacity of his conversation, gave him the appearance of continual interference and exclusive preponderance in the national councils, which went far beyond his intentions, and beyond the facts, as well as constitutional *convenances*. I am convinced that his son-in-law, King Leopold, infinitely more prudent and reserved as he was in his sentiments and language, nevertheless exercised in the internal and external affairs of Belgium more of personal influence than King Louis Philippe did in those of France. But the one carefully avoided all ostentation of that influence, while the other showed himself incessantly possessed by the fear lest justice should not be done to his designs and efforts.'

Since the fall of Louis Philippe we have seen the personal initiative of the sovereign assumed in France in a style wholly without precedent in constitutional monarchies. But, in truth, the occupant of a throne raised by a revolution cannot rest tranquilly on it, nor play the part of *roi fainéant* to which parliamentary politicians instinctively seek to confine constitutional monarchs. In such a position King Log incurs more danger of dethronement than King Stork. Perhaps, after all, it was not so much Louis Philippe's somewhat paraded personal action on the policy of his reign that ultimately proved fatal to its duration, as the ostentatiously conservative and pacific character of that action.

'The idea of *peace*,' says M. Guizot, 'in all its morality and all its grandeur, had deeply penetrated the mind and heart of King Louis Philippe. The miseries and iniquities which war inflicts on mankind, often for motives the most frivolous and combinations the most futile, revolted his humanity not less than his good sense. Of all the great social aspirations—that I may not say all the bright illusions—with which his epoch and education had fed his youth,

that which had made more impression on him than any other, and retained more hold of his mind and heart, was *Peace*.' (Vol. ii. p. 258.)

Louis Philippe's policy may perhaps as often have been right as wrong, in its declared aversion to whatever had an adventurous character, whether abroad or at home. But, in France, a policy which should have had more an air of adventure, which should have seemed less studious of peace at any price than the Citizen King's, which should have *shown game*, on some field or other, to the restlessness which divides the mind of the French nation with love of rest and the material advantages which attend it, might have had a better chance of living, at least as long as its author.

'There is a radical difficulty in the government of this country,' observed M. de Barante, writing to M. Guizot in 1843; 'it feels its need of rest; it loves the *statu quo*; it sticks to its routines; it keeps an eye to interest which has nothing about it adventurous or restless. On the other hand, there is a craving in men's minds to be occupied and amused—*les imaginations ne veulent pas être ennuyées*—recollections are cherished of the Revolution and the Empire. Of these two dispositions, the first is more real and serious than the second. M. Thiers himself makes no mistake on that point. I think I have told you that he once wrote to me—'I know what France wants: she wants such an Administration as the Cardinal de Fleury's.'''

The throne of the barricades lost its best chance of duration by the deplorable accident which deprived it of a highly promising heir-apparent in 1842. The Duke of Orleans seems to have possessed more of a royal and more of a popular spirit than his father—who, in describing his own fitness for *royalty*, described himself wholly in respectable negatives. 'He said to me one day,' says M. Guizot, 'I have no mistresses and no favourite. I am addicted neither to war, nor play, nor the chase. People say I have too much taste for building; but the treasury does not suffer from that taste any more than morality.' The Duke of Orleans gave promise

of a character less confined to the *morale bourgeoise*, and adapted for a less prosaic régime, than his father's monarchy of the middle class.

'In politics,' says M. Guizot, 'he had a strong sympathy with the national instincts, a warm devotion to the greatness of France, a complaisant coquetry for popular favour—not to say sometimes for revolutionary passions and impulses. He had those brilliant, confident, and bold qualities which please at popular crises, and rally excitable and agitated nations round their chiefs. In the royal family and the France of his day his death left an immense void—a void the sad and just presentiment of which was felt at the moment of its occurrence, even by those whom the presumed dispositions of the prince inspired with some solicitude.'

If we had to characterise Louis Philippe's defects as a king by a single expression, we should be disposed to say that he had not enough of the kingly temper. He was a very unexceptionable representative of all the well-to-do business-men and sober and *rangés* family men in France,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A curious instance of Louis Philippe's little family politics on the eve of serious crises, and the somewhat exaggerated importance he attached to '*calls réciproques on both sides of the Channel*,' will be found in the following extract from a letter addressed by him to his sister Madame Adelaide, at Brussels, on July 2, 1840—that is to say, barely a week or two before the conclusion of the treaty of that month between England and three other great Powers, excluding France. At this epoch, as afterwards on the eve of the explosion of February 1848, the royal *entourage* were apparently more awake than the King's sanguine self-confidence allowed him to be to the real state of affairs and relations abroad or at home. We make the extract from autograph MSS. in our possession (see *Fortnightly Review* for May 1, 1866, Art. VII.):—

'J'ai compris parce que tu me mandais qu'il y avait quelque importance à décider le départ de Nemours pour que sa visite à la Reine d'Angleterre eût lieu le plus tôt possible, et j'y ai réussi, il partira de manière à arriver à Londres vendredi 10 ou samedi 11 au plus tard. La négociation n'était pas facile. J'ai été d'abord chez la Reine, à qui j'ai lu le Message dont le Roi Léopold t'avait chargé au nom de la Reine Victoria. . . . Je lui ai dit que d'abord Nemours n'avait pas même un prétexte pour rester ici en ce moment, et ne pas mettre plus d'empressement à se rendre à l'aimable invitation de la Reine Victoria, que selon moi il aurait dû y avoir été plus tôt, mais qu'à présent il était clair qu'il ne pouvait pas y aller au mois d'août, que remettre à septembre était non seulement maussade, mais probablement impossible, puisqu'il était probable qu'il irait à Alger à cette époque, etc. Quand tout cela a été senti et compris, nous nous sommes transportés chez Victoire [the late Duchess de Nemours], qui était seule, Nemours n'étant pas revenu de Paris. Fort heureusement, après pourtant que j'avais fait un second déploiement de mon



who asked no more of any Government or dynasty than that it would let them sit each under his own vine or under his own fig-tree, unvexed by Jona-prophecies of the fall of Nineveh, or by *émeutes* or *ordonnances*, which were sure, at least, to produce a fall of the funds. William III. in England, Napoleon III. in France, were each aspirants to thrones in the name of ideas. Louis Philippe, according to M. Guizot, was not, properly speaking, an aspirant to the throne of France at all, though he held himself ready to become the tenant of the Tuileries—mainly that he might not again be evicted from the Palais Royal. 'Moderate and prudent'—so he is described by his ex-Minister—'he had long foreseen the chances which might elevate him to the throne, but without seeking, and rather inclined to dread than desire, that elevation.' Such is not the temper required for reigning; a more pronounced vocation, a more inspired mission, befit the 'king of men,' who must represent something more than the merely household interests either of his own family or of all other families in established positions, whose support of a Government is regulated by much the same principles as might be their subscription to an insurance office.

Louis Philippe in early manhood was plunged by revolution to sink or swim, without corks or bladders, in the common element of the modern human struggle for fame—and bread. The impressions made on him by that first struggle for life (gallantly sustained) were indelible. 'He had witnessed,' says M. Guizot in his *Memoirs*, 'such unforeseen disasters, lived amidst such vast ruins, and himself under-

éloquence, Chartres et Joinville y sont arrivés. Aussitôt, j'ai fait un troisième déploiement qui a persuadé Chartres. Il s'est tourné vers Joinville, et lui a dit, *Mais n'es-tu pas d'avis qu'il faut que Nemours aille à Londres sans retard?* Joinville en est convenu assez faiblement, mais il en est convenu, et ils sont partis ensemble pour le bain, afin, disait Chartres, d'endoctriner Nemours, ce qui ne sera pas facile. Alors j'étais sûr du succès, et en effet Chartres est revenu pendant que j'étais dans le bain m'annoncer qu'il avait réussi, et que Nemours serait à Londres le 12. Je me suis recréé, *C'est un dimanche*, il faut qu'il y soit le 10, et tout s'est arrangé après le dîner pour le 10 ou le 11 au plus tard. J'ai recommandé à Nemours d'écrire lui-même à la Reine Victoria, et il m'a dit qu'il le ferait. Malgré cela je désire que Louise ou le Roi [King Leopold] ou tous les deux écrivent de leur côté qu'il sera à Londres le 10 ou le 11 au plus tard, et qu'on le lui mande, afin qu'il n'y ait pas de trainasseries.'

gone such personal distresses, that there had remained in his mind an extreme distrust of the future and a vivid apprehension of the fatal chances which might yet befall himself and his family. Sometimes he recalled to recollection, with just pride, the days of his early peregrinations and poverty; sometimes he spoke of them with recollections full of bitterness and foresight full of alarm. In September 1843, during Queen Victoria's first visit to the Château d'Eu, walking one day in the château gardens, and passing some espaliers covered with fine peaches, the King picked a peach and offered it to the Queen, who wished to eat it, but did not know how to set about peeling it. The King took a knife out of his pocket, saying, 'When one has been a poor devil like me, living at forty sous a-day, one has always a knife in one's pocket;' and he smiled, as did all the bystanders, at this souvenir of his penury. On another occasion I was alone with him, when he spoke to me of his domestic situation, of the future of his family, and the chances which still impended over it. He entered on the details of the charges he had to support, his debts, the absurd reports of his wealth, and, warming with the subject, suddenly seized my hand and said to me with an air of extreme anxiety, '*My dear Minister, I assure you my children will not have bread!*' At times when he was under the dominion of such impressions, he would seek eagerly for his family and for himself material guarantees of the future; and at the same time would exhale his complaints and express his apprehensions with an *abandon*, an intemperance of language, which astonished his hearers, even the most friendly, furnished to his enemies rich materials for their malignant credulity or mendacity, and fomented in the public at large that distrustful disposition with which we had to contend when we came to the Chambers to claim for the royal family, in the name of justice and good policy, those dotations which the King seemed to solicit for himself in person in the character of a greedy and importunate suitor.'

M. Guizot says, with truth, that no one would now think of repeating the inconceivable exaggerations and odious

calumnies as to the fortune of the ex-King of the French, or as to his sordid greed in matters of private interest, which were everywhere propagated and accredited while he filled the throne. But he says, with equal truth, that the inconsiderate demeanour of Louis Philippe himself was one of the main causes of the unfavourable posture of the public mind towards him in this respect. 'No prince,' says M. Guizot, 'I might almost say no man, was ever more in the habit of bringing on himself burthens of blame which he did not deserve, and giving himself the appearance of faults which he did not commit.'

To know a man's character, one ought to know his ambition. There could be no mistake about that of Louis Napoleon, when—'*pauper et exsul*'—he would lounge into Herries' bank in St. James's Street, and tell the clerks he should one day be Emperor of France. But what then was Louis Philippe's ambition? Well, it was the usual one—to make his way in the world by such means as a ruined family (in fame as in fortune) left open, in a revolutionised age, to its eldest son. He had enrolled himself in the Jacobin club as *Egalité fils* at the age of seventeen, and distinguished himself in the French Republican army when it first showed a front to Europe. But *Egalité fils* was soon involved in Jacobin proscription with *Egalité père*, and the royal protégé of Dumouriez had to take refuge with him from the Republican in the Austrian ranks. A story is told of a reply of the young Duc de Chartres to some Austrian officers who expressed their astonishment that he should have condescended to adopt, in imitation of his too famous father, the burlesque name of *Egalité*. 'I only took that name,' the young ex-Jacobin ex-royal fugitive is said to have replied, '*pour mettre dedans les badauds de Paris.*' Whatever foundation there may have been, or may not have been, for that anecdote, it is very certain that Louis Philippe retained through life impressions not less vivid of revolutionary ascendancy, as an ill-laid ghost which might make sudden reappearance, than of poverty and exile, as companions of youth which might revisit his age. It is the day before revolutions, not the day after, that fosters

The question, Why did the Orleans dynasty fall? has received many and various answers. But it is sometimes forgotten that there is another question to be asked respecting that dynasty—viz. Why did it stand seventeen or eighteen years first, before it fell? The restoration and the reign of the House of Orleans, taken together, occupied a period nearly extending to the term assigned a generation of man, and the younger branch of the House of Bourbon reigned during the better half of that period. We are entirely of opinion with a reflective German politician,<sup>1</sup> that neither the alleged excessive corruption nor arbitrary administration of the Orleans Government account for its abrupt catastrophe. 'How, indeed,' asked Tocqueville in a letter addressed to the late Mr. Senior nearly half-a-year before the February Revolution;<sup>2</sup> 'how prevent a Government from carrying itself on by corruption, when the parliamentary régime naturally creates for it so much need to do so, and centralisation gives it so many means? The fact is we are trying to make two things go on together which have never before, to my knowledge, been united—an elective assembly and a highly centralised executive power.' Tocqueville, however, pointed out to his English friend, with prophetic insight, the singular *malaise* and sense of instability in the existing order of things which had for some time been creeping over men's minds in France. The middle class, in his view, was gradually becoming, in that of the rest of the nation, a new aristocracy, petty, vulgar, and arrogant, by which it was beginning to seem shameful to let themselves be governed. Lamartine (we think) called the Revolution of February a 'revolution du mépris.' We should be more disposed to call it a revolution of apathy, ennui, and indifference. Of bribery and corruption in direct and sordid shapes there was not a tithe of the amount in French that there is in English elections. Of arbitrary government we really think Louis Philippe's reign was not more guilty than perhaps any Government which had gone before or came after. He who rides the French 'democracy'

<sup>1</sup> Von Usedom, *Politische Briefe*, &c., p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Nouvelle Correspondance*, p. 231.

is, we suspect, more likely to lose the saddle, if he does not make it feel bit and spur, than if he does. But then it must be coaxed also, and given its head on certain occasions. Louis Philippe was rather too apt to begin by humouring and end by frustrating it of its will. 'It was the disposition of that prince,' says M. Guizot, 'to associate himself heartily with patriotic emotions, without allowing them to get the better of his calmer judgment. He was full of sympathy, and even complaisance, for the national sentiment, yet retaining his own independence of mind; very capable of participating to-day in its impulses, and of recognising to-morrow the error and peril of those impulses.'

To the question, why Louis Philippe reigned so long, and reigned no longer? it is sometimes, in substance, answered—because, in his essential policy, he represented the prose of the French people, and not its poetry. And yet he was everlastingly aiming to do the poetical as an element of French politics. As, at his entrance into life, the young Egalité affected, with hereditary alacrity, to draw patriotic inspiration from the sombre sources of Jacobinism, so as Citizen King he sought a species of borrowed popularity by paying, we must think, most impolitic tributes to the memories of the First Empire on canvas, in stone, in second obsequies of a warrior he would have done more wisely to leave quiet in his grave; and in participating, or affecting to participate, the French *engouement* for a second Napoleon in the East, in the shape of a semi-barbarous Turkish Pacha. All the young Egalité's flirtations with Jacobinism (which stopped short of complicity in its crimes) could not maintain his footing in the Jacobinised armies of the French Republic. All his later monumental and funereal homage to Napoleonism only inflamed passions to which his resolute peace policy refused substantial satisfaction. For a monarch who preferred to the most brilliant war the most inglorious peace, it might seem somewhat superfluous to spend millions on millions in fortifying a capital which certainly no unchallenged or unprovoked enemy would care to attack—to incur deficit upon deficit in increasing forces he was predetermined not to use.

## X.

CÆSARISM IN FRANCE RESURGENT—NAPOLEON THE  
NEPHEW.<sup>1</sup>

IN the later editions of Archbishop Whately's well-known satire, aimed at the German Egyptologists, and entitled 'Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte,' the good prelate added an ironically grave exposure of the monstrous improbabilities involved in the commonly received report that the mouldering bones of the first great French Emperor had been shipped from St. Helena to France by the pious care of a junior Bourbon king, the interest of whose dynasty plainly would have suggested to him to leave those bones where they were; and an equally grave exposure of the later legend that *another* Napoleon Bonaparte—'a kind of new incarnation of their Grand Lama'—in the person of a pretender claiming to be the nephew of the hero of the older legend, was again at the head of the Government of France under the title of President. But had the good Archbishop lived to hear of that *second* Napoleon having played out, for nearly a score of years, the play of a *second* Empire—to land at last in a *second* St. Helena at Chislehurst—what a field had opened to him for a fresh series of 'Historic Doubts!' 'Here,' he might have urged, 'we have an Imperial nephew, even more plainly and palpably mythical than the Imperial uncle—called, it would seem, into existence merely to point the moral of an unappeased Nemesis, following into a second generation the name and family of the first fabled hero.'

That this nephew of that uncle, all through youth and well half through manhood, should have brooded over an apparently hopeless day-dream of an Imperial throne, which,

<sup>1</sup> Now first published.

won by the sword, had in turn been lost by the sword, seemingly for ever, at Waterloo—that this devoutest of self-believers should have found, in the least believing of nations, believers in him by millions, on the sole strength of his Napoleonic name; and having, *per fas aut nefas*, made himself absolute master of France, should have set about remodelling Europe upon a system founded on the first Napoleon's posthumously published after-thoughts of general European *enfranchisement*—all this our good Archbishop might have adduced as the most conclusive evidence of the legendary character of the second as of the first Napoleon. And, he might have added, the most incredible part of the later legend was, that the Napoleonic idea—the fabulous legacy of the uncle—was described by that legend as having been actually, in great part, realised during the nephew's reign—realised indeed with consequences the last that would have been desired whether by uncle or nephew.

Amidst all the differences of personal character and political circumstance between the first and second crowned and throned representatives of Napoleonic Cæsarism in France, there is one point of resemblance—that each in turn based his claim to rule on popular suffrage.

Omitting to observe this, moral essayists may amuse themselves with invectives as empty as eloquent against usurpation and tyranny. Such invectives will go but little way towards accounting for the all but universal popular acquiescence in usurpation and tyranny—towards explaining how it happened that, in the case of the second as of the first Napoleon, the great unpolitical majority of the French people added their voices to the acclaim with which the army hailed its chosen emperor. To what purpose are interminable denunciations of conspiracies in which all conspired? of usurpations in which all were accessaries before the act—all assisting in its accomplishment?

Of the recent publications illustrative of the reign and character of the late Emperor of the French, the earliest in date, and the most unpretending in form, though by no means the least weighty in substance, is a little *brochure* on

‘Napoleon III.,’ in 1872, by the eminent historian Professor von Sybel, whom we have already had occasion to quote. To have been composed so soon after the triumph of his country in the Franco-German war, Professor von Sybel’s biographical essay is singularly dispassionate in tone and comprehensive in judgment. In these respects it has hardly been excelled, if equalled, by anything that has appeared since. There is nothing whatever in it about the Gallic ‘*Erbfeind*’—about the superiority, moral and intellectual, ‘which nobody can deny’ to the German over all other races of mortal men. Nothing of all this. Herr von Sybel, though a German professor, is too much a world-philosopher to have anything about him of the German professorial Imperial Chauvinism which sometimes seems to threaten, in these latter days, to out-Herod the French. His ‘Napoleon III.’ is really a masterly sketch of the higher as well as the lower qualities which marked the character and signalised the reign of the late French autocrat. His rapid though discriminating touch helps us better than we are helped by some works of more volume and of more pretension to understand to what was owing the duration (considerable, as French dynasties go) of the late reign, and to what was owing its disastrous close.

The most reliable—we may add, the most redoubtable—witnesses against or in favour of any character are, firstly, those whose acquaintance with it has been derived from early familiar companionship, and, secondly, those whose opportunities have been best, and whose motives strongest, for forming a correct judgment of it in maturer years. Amongst the former class of witnesses, much light is thrown on the strong and weak points of the singular and reserved character now under our review by a lady<sup>1</sup> who was foster-

<sup>1</sup> Madame Cornu. Of this lady M. de Corcelle gave the following account to Mr. Senior in 1857:—‘She wrote for Louis Napoleon a great part of his book on artillery practice. She used to read and make notes for him in the *Bibliothèque* when he was at Ham. Two days after the *coup d’état* she was to have breakfasted with the Princess Mathilde; she sent word that she would not go. The Grand Duchess Stéphanie called on her in her cottage in the Rue Rousselet to persuade her to change her mind; she spoke out against Louis



sister of Louis Napoleon, and his playfellow from childhood, who was an assiduous purveyor to him of literary aids and appliances during his long imprisonment at Ham, and with whom his intimacy, broken off for a time by her patriotic resentment of the December *coup d'état*, was in a measure renewed during the latter years of the Empire. Professor von Sybel was the first to cite this lady, without naming her, as having had a more intimate knowledge than most people of the real character of the late Emperor of the French.

'About ten years ago,' says Professor von Sybel (writing in 1872), 'I had the honour to make this lady's acquaintance. Some one asked her, in the course of familiar conversation, whether the Emperor had feeling. "Certainly," she said, "he has feeling, quite in the German sense of the word *Gemüth*. He is of an affectionate, friendly nature; he would wish at all times to give pleasure to those around him. But there is in his inner mind a sensitive place which no one must touch, and that is *the inalienable right and title of his dynasty*. If contradicted on that point, his passion breaks all bounds; he is transformed into a tiger.'

'In illustration of this trait of character, she mentioned an incident of her childhood. The Prince might have been about twelve years old, when she was one day chattering with him in the garden at Arenenberg, under the windows of the chateau. She happened to chaff him about his dreams of one day becoming an Emperor. His eyes flashed fire, but he restrained himself for the moment, and went on chattering with her as before, till he had wiled her into the park to some distance from the chateau, and when he had got her into a lonely place, quite safe from observation, sprang suddenly upon her, seized one of her arms with both hands, and exclaimed, hoarse with rage:—"Retract, retract what you have said, or I will break your arm!" He had grasped it so tight that she could not move it freely for a week.'

Napoleon and the *coup d'état* with a violence which frightened the Duchess. "Tell him," she said, "that the gipsy's prophecy will be fulfilled. He has accomplished one half of it; the people will do the rest." *Senior*.—What prophecy? *Coroelle*.—It is a story well known in the family. Queen Hortense, when he was a child, had his fortune told by a gipsy. She prophesied that he would rise to the highest eminence of power and of fame, and would be killed by a bullet entering his forehead. The Grand Duchess delivered the message. "Nothing is more probable," he answered.'

Mr. Jerrold, in his 'Life of Napoleon III.,' claims authority to cite Madame Cornu's personal testimony in contradiction of the above anecdote. But the Bonapartist biographer does not think it necessary to observe accuracy in his version of the incident which he desires, officiously if not officially, to discredit. 'The little Prince Louis,' says Mr. Jerrold, '*never beat his playmate Hortense* [Madame Cornu] because she laughed at his lofty conception of his destiny.' Professor von Sybel never said that he beat her, but only that he once squeezed her arm rather hard. Mr. Jerrold is rash in referring his readers to Madame Cornu's testimony to Louis Napoleon's invariably gentle temper from childhood. That lady, in the conversations placed on record by the late Mr. Senior, says, in 1863, of her old playmate and foster-brother, 'He has a calm crust, but furious Italian passions boil beneath it. As a child he was subject to fits of anger such as I never saw in anyone else. While they lasted he did not know what he said or did.'<sup>1</sup> In later years, however, Louis Napoleon acquired the power, if not to conquer, at least to conceal his angry passions.

*Imaginative* and *romantic* are the epithets which appear to us, on the whole, most applicable to Napoleon III., as to Napoleon I. 'What Nature,' said his early friend above cited, Madame Cornu, 'intended him for was a poet. He has an inventive, original, and powerful imagination, which under proper guidance would have produced something great.'<sup>2</sup> To the like effect we may cite the following testimony of the late Léon Faucher, who was Minister of Louis Napoleon during a critical period of his Presidency:—

His imagination predominates over his reason; it is wild, romantic (romanesque), and irregular. His fatalism is blinder than his uncle's. When the Emperor [Napoleon I.] talked of his star it was a metaphor. Louis Napoleon really believes in some astral

<sup>1</sup> 'When we quarrelled,' said the same lady, in another conversation with the same gentleman, 'he used to *bite*, not to *strike*. He used to say to me, "*Je ne t'ai jamais battu*." I answered, "*Non, mais tu m'as mordu*."'

<sup>2</sup> Senior's *Conversations with Thiers, Guizot, &c.*, vol. ii. p. 58.

agency presiding over his fate. Never was there a mind that more required to be disciplined by advice, and example, and opposition, and collision—in short, by free intercourse with equals and superiors. And few have enjoyed these advantages less. He began life in Italy among a set of petty intriguing princes who lived in conspiracies ; in one of them, directed against the Pope, his brother perished, and he himself narrowly escaped. Another attempt and another escape at Strasburg confirmed the propensity. , Again he tried, and, though he failed in his object, he again escaped with life at Boulogne. To a mind like his few situations could be more unfavourable than his six years' imprisonment at Ham. His strange theories about himself and about France gained consistency and obstinacy in his solitary meditations. And it must be confessed that the degree in which they must appear to him to be in process of realisation might well have turned a stronger head.

In Prince Albert's memorandum of his first visit to Napoleon III. at Boulogne, the latter is stated to have described as follows his own scheme of government to the late Duke of Newcastle :—‘ Former governments tried to reign by the support of perhaps *one* million of the educated classes. I have tried to lay hold of the other *twenty-nine*.’

That was not the difficulty to the heir of the name of Napoleon. The difficulty was to know what to do, in the long run, with his twenty-nine millions when he had laid hold of them. They had lent him their votes, and the soldiery their arms, to suppress the sway of ‘the educated classes’ (so many as there might be of such among the one million) ; but how were they to be shown game, and found work, permanently in their own way ?

‘ Having deprived the people,’ said Prince Albert, ‘ of every active participation in the government, and having reduced them to mere passive spectators, he is bound to keep up the “spectacle” ; and, as at fireworks, whenever a pause takes place between the different displays, the public immediately grows impatient, forgets what it has just applauded, and that new preparations require time.’

If to the physical force of the twenty-nine millions Louis Napoleon had laid hold of could have been added the moral force of the one million he set systematically at nought, the

problem he had tasked himself to solve might have been solved more successfully. But this was impossible with the Napoleonic ideas on which his system rested. *On ne s'appuie que sur ce qui résiste.*

From the moment when Louis Napoleon's 'twenty-nine millions' made him a power in Europe, he lost no time in putting forth feelers in all directions for European alliances. These he might long have courted in vain but for the happy accidents which made Nicholas of Russia his enemy and England his ally in the everlasting Eastern quarrel.

His first authentic overture as President for a continental alliance was made in the shape of a confidential mission of his *fidus Achates*, Persigny, to Berlin, shortly before his *coup d'état* of December 1851. This we cite on the authority of Professor von Sybel, and we take the Professor's word with perfect confidence for the source whence he derived it—from General von Radowitz himself, namely, then a leading Prussian statesman who had been thrown out of office shortly before the epoch now under our review, as one of the consequences of Austria's triumphant dictation of Prussian policy at Olmutz. Now the French Prince-President's overture was for an alliance with Prussia against Austria; the *mollia tempora fandi* were selected just after Frederick William IV.'s submissive and complete surrender to Austria at Olmutz, and the channel of communication with the Prussian monarch was Von Radowitz, whose counsels had just been thrown over for the temporising and timid conservatism of Manteuffel.

This is the first instance among many in which the late French ruler seems to have taken for granted that his *idées Napoléoniennes* need only be proposed to triumph over whatever foregone conclusions might have been formed by any parties or any potentates he had to deal with.

'His emissary,' says Professor von Sybel, 'made the fullest and most detailed communication of the objects of this mission, as well in official form as in private conversations, especially with General Radowitz, through whose channel he had more hope of working on King Frederick William IV. than through that of his ministers.

Vague and imperfect notices only of these negotiations have, so far as I know, hitherto obtained publicity. I propose, therefore, to give them in some detail, as I have them from General von Radowitz himself, affording, as they do, indications in the highest degree characteristic of the Napoleonic policy. "Our internal situation," said Persigny to the Prussian General, "is altogether different from that of Germany. Fifty years of revolution have shattered to atoms amongst us all notions of right and law—material force alone retains any ascendancy over us. But no force is effective except that which is organised, and nothing amongst us is organised except the army and the proletariat. Now the name of Napoleon gives us a hold of the army. We shall get hold of the proletariat by finding them abundant employment at advanced wages. We cannot fail therefore of establishing our power on solid foundations.'

On the position of France in Europe M. de Persigny remarked as follows:—

Napoleon the First prospered so long as he limited himself to the natural vocation of France—hegemony of the Latin race in Southern Europe. He fell by the unwise effort to bring Germany within the sphere of his empire. Thereby also he perpetuated his breach with England; but, as we have now learned by experience, though France may win victories, she cannot finally triumph against England and Germany united. In this the greatest of French generals failed, and we have now no such generals. Our natural interest and ambition point southward. We can endure no longer that Austria should rule over all Italy. But Austria stands in your way in Germany as much as in ours in Italy. Our mutual interests therefore directly point to a compact alliance against a common enemy.

The question, what was to follow on the humiliation of Austria, received the following answer:—

Our object is the establishment of solid and permanent external relations. We neither desire, therefore, by indulging any blind lust of aggrandisement, to array Europe against us, nor to wage war against the nature of things. But in Italy as in Germany, the nature of things demands a national organisation. It will be a sufficient gain for us to drive Austria out of Italy. If you will help us to do this, it is understood between us that you shall constitute Germany in accordance with German national aspirations, neither here nor there do we seek to secure for ourselves any material advantage.

The last expression seemed to require, and received, a more special explanation.

‘We aim,’ Persigny reiterated, ‘at no conquest. France has power enough, rightly used, to lead and to rule the world; whereas, as conquerors, we should arm the world against us. We shall earnestly aim to avoid appropriating to ourselves, if we can possibly help it, so much as a spadeful of foreign territory. We cannot be sure indeed that we shall not find it necessary, for the satisfaction of public opinion in France, to have something in the shape of material gain to show for ourselves. Should that be so, we should look in the direction of Savoy or Landau.’

‘These extraordinary communications,’ says Professor von Sybel, ‘read like a chapter of the *Idées Napoléoniennes*, and may be said to form a practical sequel and special application of the principles of policy set forth in that work in 1839. They are presented in a form adapted to the point of view of the Prussian interlocutor, while, at the same time, the reiterated assertion of perfect disinterestedness is coupled, in the concluding words of Persigny, with a shrewd commentary.’

Professor von Sybel adds :—

These French overtures were courteously but categorically declined on the part of Prussia. To lay such propositions before King Frederick William IV. was indeed a strong thing to do, and the best proof possible of the undoubting certitude with which Louis Napoleon believed in the irresistible attractiveness of his system. Any statesman, in the practical sense of the word, could have at once told him that, at that epoch, just a year after the events of Olmutz, the King was certain to reject with abhorrence the idea of Prussia plunging into revolutionary courses to promote German national unity.

Austrian accounts say that Persigny, on his rebuff by Prussia, instantly proceeded, and with no better success, to sound M. de Prokesch, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin, on the subject of an Austro-French alliance against Prussia. ‘The thing,’ adds Professor von Sybel, ‘is not impossible. It was always pronounced by the first Napoleon a high point of policy to have two strings to your bow. Hitherto, however, no positive evidence has been produced on the subject.’

Taking no account, as *de non apparentibus*, of overtures at Vienna following on the repulse of those at Berlin, the remark suggests itself, that President Louis Napoleon's proposals to Prussia were not only in exact accordance with the adventurous policy chalked out previously for himself in exile by the future Emperor of the French, but with the subsequent carrying out of that policy by his war with Austria in 1859. At the latter\*epoch Napoleon III. embarked single-handed in that enterprise which, eight years before, he had vainly courted the alliance of Prussia to aid him in accomplishing; and its accomplishment by French arms first helped Prussia gratis to drive Austria out of Germany by aid of an alliance with the newly-liberated Italy, and secondly, by no remote consequence, to unite Germany in a national war against France.

‘Let's own, now that it can do no good on earth,’ that what was chimerical in the projects of the second French Cæsar for remodelling the map of Europe in the interest of the Napoleonic dynasty, was chimerical rather as regarded the projector's power to carry them out in that interest, than in the nature of those projects themselves, which for the most part have been carried out since in other interests than in those of the name or house of Napoleon. How was it that Louis Napoleon failed, while Otto Von Bismarck succeeded, in remodelling the map of Europe to his mind and the advantage of the Empire he represented? Omitting disputes of detail, the decisive difference between the French Emperor and the German Chancellor was difference of character—difference of insight into actual situations and circumstances—difference, above all, in promptitude of action to carry out matured design. Louis Napoleon, whether as President or Emperor, was by no means deficient in abstract power of thought; but his thought was solitary—the thought of the recluse of Arenenberg or the prisoner of Ham. He had passed through no training which could give him a reliable faculty for adapting, from time to time, the results of reflection to the real course of affairs. He formed sufficiently clear conceptions of the general ends he

had in view; and foremost always of those ends was the recovery of the Imperial influence and political and military preponderance of France in Europe. But he neither measured the limits within which those ends were attainable, nor his means to compass them, nor the tempers and interests he would have to deal with in third parties concerned.

The map of Europe has actually been remodelled, to an enormous extent, very considerably in consequence of the policy, active or passive, of the (self-styled) third Napoleon. As regards Italy and Germany, it has been remodelled in those interests of unity which the first Napoleon, when finally relegated to his rock, affected to have always had in view throughout that career of conquest in Central and Southern Europe which—in the view of its victims—seemed solely motived by ambition, and solely sustained by spoliation. Italy has been remodelled with French Imperial aid, but unluckily not remodelled into a federation of states of manageable dimensions, with the Pope for Grand Vicar and the Emperor of the French for Grand Protector. Germany has been remodelled by French Imperial connivance, but unluckily without reconstituting a confederation of the Rhine under French dependence, or a surrender of its left bank to France. The treaties of 1815, denounced at Auxerre, have been torn up by Sadowa, but the territorial losses inflicted on France by Waterloo have been sorely aggravated since Sedan.

A truth was told by our late Prince Consort to the late Emperor of the French which the latter might wisely have taken to heart for his future guidance—‘*No monarch has ever been great without having a great Minister.*’

The converse, indeed, would hardly hold. Richelieu was a great Minister under Louis XIII. Bismarck has been a great Minister under William I. But for a Minister to achieve greatness, whether for himself or his country, it is indispensable that his monarch should either be weak to resist or strong to support him. The master of Richelieu fulfilled the former condition, the master of Bismarck the latter.



Napoleon III. made two great Ministers, but he made them for other nations—Count Cavour and Count Bismarck.

Napoleon III. appeared to listen to Prince Albert, as he always appeared to listen to words of wisdom, while for the most part he was only listening to his own familiar spirit, whose whispers, inaudible to all ears but his own, he obeyed as implicitly as Socrates did those of his Dæmon. It was in truth impossible that Napoleon III. should have had a great Minister. His fixed idea was to be a great monarch, whose greatness should be rivalled or eclipsed by no Minister, and for whom therefore there could be no possible prospect of having a great one. No independent public man could long be Minister of Napoleon III. He never gave his unreserved confidence to any Ministers, never answered their arguments and never acted on their advice, unless it agreed with his own foregone conclusions. Even before the *coup d'état*—throughout those three years of presidency during which Louis Napoleon may be said to have been a dictator on trial—Alexis de Tocqueville, who was for a short time his Minister, said of him, 'He has not learned even the principles of parliamentary government.' [It would have been more accurate to have said he systematically refused to recognise them.] 'He is resolved not only to be his own Prime Minister, but to be his own sole Minister. Hence arises the anomaly that the leading men in the Assembly vote against the Ministry, and yet refuse to take office. They vote against the Ministry because they fancy that they see in them the accomplices of an usurpation; they refuse to take office, because they would incur responsibility without having free agency.'

'Louis Napoleon,' said Cousin to Mr. Senior in 1853, 'has exempted himself from all parliamentary influence; he has forbidden the press to tender him any advice; he imposes silence on his Ministers. He has often, while he was President, said to me, "I intend to have no *Président du Conseil*. I am responsible; I choose to act; all that I ask from my Ministers is obedience and skill in details. The outline of all my measures will be drawn by myself." Now what but blunders on blunders can be the fruit of such blind self-conceit?'

Omniscience and omnipotence would have been requisite permanently to found an individual despotism in a civilised age, and a despotism thinly disguised was the régime sought to be founded by the second French Empire. The educated 'one million' were ready to have acquiesced in some sort of temporary dictatorship, but it should have been a dictatorship suspending as little as possible the course of constitutional rule. The restoration of a Napoleonic dynasty would have been accepted under constitutional conditions, but educated opinion revolted from the re-establishment by violence of a Napoleonic despotism. 'But the President,' said Alexis de Tocqueville shortly before the *coup d'état*, 'is as proof against all constitutional ideas as Charles X. was. He has his own legitimacy, and he believes as firmly in the Imperial constitution as Charles X. did in divine right.'

What then was the radical and fatal vice of Louis Napoleon's system? *Il péchait par la base*, and that basis was self-sufficiency. We do not use the word quite in Cousin's sense, as synonymous with self-conceit. The self-sufficingness (*αὐτάρκεια*) we ascribe to Louis Napoleon was the product of his profound faith in his political religion—that of Napoleonic Cæsarism—which he had imbibed, as it were, with his mother's milk. It rested on the assumption that parliamentary government had been tried in France and failed, and on the postulate that the sole available alternative was the restoration of Napoleonic autocracy.

Prince Albert's memorandum of his Boulogne visit exposes in his Imperial interlocutor a strange compound of Louis XIV.'s spirit of uncontrolled absolutism over his Ministers and Louis XV.'s spirit of intrigue against them. It is not surprising if no men of established reputation and independent character could become, or at least continue for any long period, Ministers of Napoleon III.

He said he did not allow his Ministers to meet or discuss matters together—that they transacted their business solely with him. *He rarely told the one what he had settled with the other.* He seemed astonished when I told him that every despatch went through the Queen's hands and was read by her, as he only received extracts from

them and indeed appeared to have little time or inclination generally to read. When I observed to him that the Queen would not be content without seeing the whole of the diplomatic correspondence, he replied that he found a full compensation in having persons in his own confidence at the different posts of importance, who reported directly to him. I could not but express my sense of the danger of such an arrangement, to which no statesman—in England at least—would consent, and which enabled the Foreign Minister (if he chose to cheat his master) always to plead to foreign countries his ignorance of what might have been done, or to throw the entire blame, in any difficulty that might occur, upon these secret instructions. The Emperor acknowledged all this, but pleaded necessity.

No man whose designs, real and supposed, gave others so much to speak about, spoke so little himself as the late Emperor Napoleon. It cannot indeed be said of him, as of Count Moltke, that he was silent in seven languages. But he was for the most part silent in all the languages he possessed, and of those legacies of Babel he possessed a share somewhat above the average of ordinarily educated Frenchmen.

This habitual reticence of the late autocrat of France contrasts very strikingly with the self-reliant, expansive communicativeness of his imperial uncle. With the first Napoleon M. de St. Aulaire told Mr. Senior he had once a long conversation.

I was at the Tuileries with Fontanes. He drew us into a window and talked uninterruptedly to us for an hour and a half, with wonderful *verve*, fulness, and originality. *Senior*—‘What were his topics?’ *St. Aulaire*—‘Everything; history, art, administration, politics, persons. He knew his forte and practised it; so does his nephew. His forte was talking; his nephew’s is silence—a still rarer accomplishment.’

An accomplishment, however, the attendant evils of which seldom came out more manifestly than in the case of the late Emperor of the French. If he withdrew his weak points from the observation of others, he deprived himself of all aid from their strength. If he guarded against their seeing into him, he missed seeing into them. As a consequence of this uncommunicative and distrustful temper, he

surrounded himself with intellectual inferiors, and kept intellectual equals and superiors at arm's length. This might be (in his opinion it was) a necessity of his position; in that case his position was a false, and in the end an imbecile one. Distrusting all men, he inevitably became distrusted of all men. Europe was kept perpetually on the *qui vive* by his supposed deep and dangerous projects.

The habit of saying nothing, as the best defence against adverse arguments and opinions, was backed by a habit of *looking* nothing, which seems to have been artificially acquired by the late French Emperor. 'His long moustache,' said his early friend Madame Cornu to the late Mr. Senior, 'is intended to conceal his mouth, and he has disciplined his eyes. When I first saw him again in 1848, I asked him what was the matter with his eyes. "Nothing," he said. A day or two after I saw him again; they had still an odd appearance. At last I found that he had been accustoming himself to keep his eyelids half closed, and to throw into his eyes a vacant, dreamy expression.'

In a conversation with M. Guizot, likewise recorded by the late Mr. Senior, this artificial expression (or rather no expression) of the eye—artificially produced, as we have seen—was alluded to as follows:—'His (the Emperor's) manner,' said M. Guizot, 'is exceedingly good, simple, mild, and gentlemanlike. The worst part of it is *the false expression of his eye*.'

This trait, detected by feminine acuteness in its first formation, gives a clue to much in the late Emperor's character, and his habitually guarded relations to all round him.

After all that has been written about the late Emperor of the French, perhaps the fairest estimate of his mind and character is that which was placed on record in a memorandum dictated to the late General Grey by Prince Albert immediately after his return from his first visit to Napoleon III. at Boulogne.<sup>1</sup>

'His general education,' said the Prince, 'appeared to me very deficient, even on subjects which are of a first necessity to him; I

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Prince Consort*, vol. iii. p. 108.

mean the political history of modern times, and political sciences generally. He was remarkably modest, however, in acknowledging these defects, and showed the greatest candour in not pretending to know what he did not. All that refers to the Napoleonic history he seems to have at his fingers' ends; he also appears to have thought much and deeply on politics, *yet more like an amateur politician*, mixing many very sound and many very crude notions together.'

Fifteen years later, during the German war with France, the redoubtable Chancellor Bismarck (as published to the world by his Boswell *redivivus*, Dr. Moritz Busch) expressed repeatedly, with no mealy-mouthed reserve, and certainly not with much remorseful sympathy, the stronger man's judgment of the weaker—the conqueror's of the conquered. Yet the testimonies from such different sources, delivered with such different sentiments, will be found mainly concurrent in substance on the character of their common subject, though not in the contemptuous estimate of it which, from the Berlin Man of Iron, was to be expected.

'He' [Napoleon III.], said Bismarck, 'is much better natured than is commonly believed, and much less of a clever fellow ["kluge Kopf"] than he has had credit for being. "That," said Lehndorff, "is something like the judgment passed by some one on the first Napoleon—a good, harmless man, but a simple fellow." "No," replied the chief, "Napoleon is really good-natured, sympathetic, not to say sentimental; but neither his intelligence nor his knowledge have any great range. In particular, he is not well up in geography, though he was educated in Germany, and went to school there. Moreover, he dwells in all sorts of fantastic visions. He has not the slightest idea how matters stand with us. I had a conversation with him in Paris after I had become Minister. He then expressed the opinion that things could not go on long as they were going in Prussia. There would be revolt in Berlin and revolution in the whole country, and if a popular vote were taken, the King would have everyone against him. I replied that, with us, the people raised no barricades; in Prussia it was kings only that made revolutions. If the King would but hold firmly by his unpopular position three or four years longer, he would win his game. If he did not get tired, and throw me over, I should not fall, and even now, if the people were appealed to, and their votes taken, he would have nine-tenths on his side. I was told that after this conversation the Emperor said of me, *'Ce n'est pas un homme sérieux.'* Naturally I did not remind him of this at the weaver's cottage at Donchery."

Prince Albert expressed himself to the same effect as Count Bismarck on the natural mansuetude of the late autocrat. 'He is,' said our Prince, 'decidedly benevolent and anxious for the good of his people, but has, like all [French] rulers before him, a bad opinion of their political capacity.'

In the fourth volume of the 'Life of the Prince Consort' a marked change of tone is observable in English royal and official communications on the subject of the late French Emperor. This is not surprising, considering the sudden change brought about by Russian diplomacy at Paris, almost immediately after the conclusion of the Crimean war, in the attitude of Napoleon III. towards the late common enemy, Russia; a change of attitude which it was speedily found had been effected at the expense of the late common ally, Austria. In an interview with the English ambassador at Paris in September 1858, Napoleon III. apologised as follows for his new phase of policy:—

I am told that my policy is tortuous, but I am not understood. I am blamed for coquetting with Austria one day and with Russia the next, and it is inferred therefore that I am not to be depended upon. But my policy is very simple. When I came to my present position I saw that France wanted peace, and I determined to maintain peace, and to uphold the treaties of 1815 so long as France was respected and held her own in the councils of Europe. But I was equally resolved, if I was forced into war, not to make peace until a better equilibrium was secured to Europe. I have no ambitious views like the late Emperor, but if other countries gain anything, France must gain something also. Well, when driven into war with Russia, I thought that no peace would be satisfactory which did not resuscitate Poland, and I humoured Austria, in the hope that she would assist me in this great work. She failed me, and after peace was made I looked to the amelioration of Italy, and therefore drew more closely to Russia. This is the whole secret of my policy.

We must interpose the remark that the late Emperor of the French does not here observe the chronological order of his day-dreams. His first dream, as we have seen, dating from his Presidency, before the *coup d'état* which elevated the President to empire, was not the resuscitation of Poland by aid of Austria, but the expulsion of Austria from Italy by

aid of Prussia. But we are quite prepared to admit that 'tortuous' is not the epithet we should consider primarily most applicable to the policy of Napoleon III. It was first of all *romantic*; and only when he found that those whose alliance he courted had romances or realities of their own which conflicted with his, became tortuous, as he was tenacious of his ends and could not choose his means. The overthrow of Austrian preponderance in Italy was the object he had from the first pursued more persistently than any other. To accomplish it, he had early solicited Prussian alliance, and solicited it in vain. He next turned to Russia, whose eagerness to avenge herself on Austrian 'ingratitude' fully disposed her to encourage France underhand to engage in her liberal war in Italy. But the moment Germany threatened to come into the field, Russia left France in the lurch. 'The Emperor,' said Colonel Claremont in a letter to Lord Cowley, 'questioned Schouvaloff much as to the chance there was that Russia would make war upon Prussia if the latter declared against France. The answer was, *None in the world.*'

The truth is, Louis Napoleon's policy, tortuous or direct, never had but one object—the aggrandisement of France as a condition to the permanence of the Napoleon dynasty. One successful and very telling step he made towards that object—the annexation of Savoy. Two or three longer steps in the same direction he meditated, without making, all through his reign. But in compassing and imagining these he sought no counsel at home and found no aid abroad. The idea may be dismissed, though it sowed suspicions in England, which sprang up armed volunteers, that he cherished any sentimental or passionate impulse to take vengeance of Waterloo. His passion, or imagination, was that of regaining for France as much as might be of what Waterloo had lost her. The aim he kept in view, with a tenacity of purpose which justified the epithet of *le doux entêté*, was enlargement of the boundaries and enhancement of the prestige of France, not revenge on the former enemies of the House of Bonaparte.

Amongst the warning examples of the perils of autocracy in mortal hands, alike to the one who holds and to the hosts who bow to it, there are few so striking as the fact that both the Napoleons who have reigned more or less absolutely over France were, at decisive crises of their fate, unnerved by disease, and rendered incapable, for the moment, of giving that impulse to action which, without their accustomed initiative, all around them had become incapable of supplying. So early as 1806, after Jena, the first Napoleon, suffering from violent pains of the stomach, was heard<sup>1</sup> to exclaim that he carried 'within him the seeds of premature death, and should die of the same disease as his father. The first of the crises at which the great Napoleon's ill-health struck a blow to his fortunes was at the battle of the Moskowa, in September 1812, which laid open the old Muscovite capital to his army; the second was after the great battle which drove back the allied armies from Dresden in August 1813. In the first instance the Russian autumn had struck a chill through his frame, which seems to have rendered him, for the time, incapable alike of that prompt decision and of that swift action to which he had owed all the astounding successes of his past career. He remained at a distance from the field of battle, which rendered his unerring *coup d'œil* unavailable, and apparently accounted for the incomplete results of the murderous day of the Moskowa. In the second instance, on the morrow after the battle of Dresden, a recurrent attack of his old internal enemy (which led those around him to suspect poison) disabled him from following up in person the intimidating effects of the defeat which he had inflicted on the Allies the day before,<sup>2</sup> gave them time to take breath, and beat his lieutenants in detail—the master's eye and word being for the moment withdrawn.

The second French Cæsar, in like manner, at two decisive crises of his fate, seems to have been physically incapable of casting into the scale of events the weight of a decided will.

<sup>1</sup> By Count Lobau.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs Militaires*, par M. le Duc de Fezensac, pp. 253-453.



At the moment when the question of peace or war with Germany yet hung in suspense, if Napoleon III. had remained master of himself—and others—he would scarcely have suffered his hand to be forced by his *entourage* into that disastrous conflict. The Gramonts and Lebœuffs—the coxcombs of court diplomacy and the braves of court militarism—would scarcely have been suffered to substitute their provocative swagger in the Chambers, and empty boasts of preparedness ‘down to every button of every gaiter’ in the army, for the better grounded misgivings of a ruler who, if no heaven-born king of men, had yet acquired faculties for rule which had long preserved him in possession of rule in France, and had long imposed respect—and ‘fear of change, perplexing monarchs’—on Europe.

Twice, within the lifetime of two generations (1789–1852) the wheel of revolution in France ran full circle through anarchy to Cæsarism. A third anarchy began to ‘adventure resurrection’ in the Paris Commune of 1871. It must be hoped, though it may be too soon yet to hope confidently, that the fatal sequence will this time be averted, and that France is not again fated to submit herself to a third Cæsarism—a third recourse to autocracy as a preferred alternative to ochlocracy—a poison administered to expel a poison—Tyranny to get rid of Anarchy. This may be, and this in France twice has seemed, a political necessity. Thrice repeated, it could scarcely be regarded otherwise than as a necessity of decadence.

## XI.

THE NAPOLEONIC AUGUSTAN AGE IN PARIS.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Das Neue Paris*. Unsere Zeit, 1857.
2. *Paris Nouveau et Paris Futur*. Par Victor Fournel. Paris, 1865.
3. *Paris-Guide, Par les Principaux Écrivains et Artistes de la France*. 2 vols. Paris, 1867.
4. *Paris unter dem Zweiten Kaiserreich*. Von Rudolf Gottschall. 4 Bde. Leipzig, 1871.
5. *Paris, ses Organes, ses Fonctions et sa Vie dans la Seconde Moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*. 5 vols. 8vo. Par Maxime Ducamp. Paris, 1869-74.

‘WHEN I grope back among the dim recollections of my Parisian childhood,’ says the first of two German writers who have successively treated of ‘New Paris’ in ‘Unsere Zeit,’ ‘it seems to me as if I had known quite another Paris, contrasting with Paris of to-day much as the fantastic city scenery in Gustave Doré’s “Wandering Jew” contrasts with the architectural splendours of John Martin’s Bible pictures.’

Traits and traces of old Paris still stood out on all sides in un-effaced sharpness, so that the romantic school of writers, of which Victor Hugo was at the head, had no trouble in making palpable to the sense how Paris might have looked in the middle ages. The leading lines of the picture of old Paris had not then become irrecongnisable. Relics of old constructions were nowhere as yet wanting; gabled façades, low doors with penthouse roofs, projecting balconies and turrets at street corners; in the interior courts, winding stone staircases, with dilapidated balustrades and landings; old pumps adorned with delicate and beautiful ironwork; groups in relievo on walls, images of saints in niches, old churches converted into dépôts and magazines—vaulted halls inside, mutilated monsters of Gothic sculpture outside. The municipal authorities were not then so inexorably rigid as they are now in requiring all houses to *dress their*

<sup>1</sup> Now first published.

*ranks*, and all projections beyond the ground-line to be cut away. Paris had then its hills and valleys. The bridges were not, as now, broad and level thoroughfares, but steep and slippery passes. After the slightest frost carriages could not surmount the steep acclivities of the Pont Neuf, the Pont au Change, the Pont Marie, and the Pont de la Tournelle. Rain of any continuance rendered the streets impassable. No regular provision was then made for carrying off the rainfall from the gutters. Instead of the present lead and iron pipes which carry it down the walls, old stone spouts stretched their necks and arms over the streets, and plentifully bedewed the passengers. The roofs shed their rainy tears without stint from every corner. The kennels swelled in the twinkling of an eye into torrents. The distant sewers had not gorge wide enough for the confluent streams. Lakes were formed at their point of confluence, and the neighbouring streets rapidly became river-beds. Tradesmen shut up their shops, and did their best to shut out the deluge [as Mrs. Partington did to sweep out the Atlantic]. When the rain ceased, the shutters were again taken down, and the shop-boys busied themselves with big sponges to mop up the moisture. By degrees the deluge subsided. The jagged and irregular Ararats of pavement on each side the street showed their summits. People re-emerged from the wide passages and doorways, where they had sought refuge from the rain, and picked their steps heedfully over the slippery ways. And now the street ferryman or pilot brought out his planks, and bridged the street rivers—a narrow, perilous bridge, which none but a dancing-master or acrobat could cross without fear and trembling. Accordingly those who did cross very commonly forgot their fee to the ferryman—'*Passez, payez!*' It would really seem as if I were merely repeating in stumbling prose what Boileau wrote in smooth verse near two centuries back, and yet I paint simply after nature. It is not my fault if Paris of 1834 in many points looked exactly like Paris of 1693.

The transformation of Paris from a mediæval to a modern city, achieved under the last Napoleon, had for centuries been the day-dream of amateurs and architects, and the paper-project of governments, from Henri Quatre to Madame de Pompadour, and from Tavannes to Voltaire. That prophet of the French, prescient, it would almost seem, of a Napoleon Emperor and a Haussmann Prefect, though scarcely of a Paris incendiary Commune, wrote in 1749 as follows :—

In less than ten years Paris might be made the wonder of the world. It is high time those at the head of the administration of the most opulent capital in Europe should make it also the most commodious and the most magnificent. Heaven grant some man may arise energetic enough to form such projects, firm enough to carry them out, endowed with a mind enlightened enough to embrace them in their whole extent, and possessed of the requisite credit and influence to secure their success.

The Prince de Ligne, that *spirituel* and frivolous Frenchman of Brussels, was more in earnest than usual in pressing the most sweeping schemes for the transformation of Paris. In a 'Mémoire sur Paris,' written about the year 1780, he put forward the following amongst other architectural projects which have since been carried into execution:— 'A grand place must be cleared from the Tuileries to the old Louvre. Those wretched sheds and booths in the Carrousel—that Rue Saint Nicaise—dishonour Paris by petty methods of making money of everything. *The truly great economy is to consult economy not at all!*' Further on the Prince de Ligne indulges in a fresh burst of indignation against all who might oppose to his projects '*ce vil mot d'argent.*' Napoleon the First said of Corneille—'If he had lived in my time, I would have made him a prince. Napoleon the Third might have said of the Prince de Ligne—'If he had lived in my time, I would have made him a member of my Municipal Commission.' There was a curious proviso in the Prince de Ligne's projects for embellishing Paris—viz. that *if any new churches were built, they should have no steeples.* The Revolution soon shelved that proviso after its own fashion. In the instance, indeed, of the old church of Saint Jacques la Boucherie, it was the church that was demolished while the tower was left standing, and converted into a patent shot manufactory. The Second Empire re-converted it into a solitary *pièce de décoration* in the newly-formed square Saint Jacques.

It was predicted of the Second Empire by Alexis de Tocqueville, on its first establishment, '*Il ne fondera rien, mais il durera.*' One thing at least that Empire founded—New Paris.

It is amongst the grim jokes of history that the overthrow of royalty in France in 1848 should have led, not remotely, to the transformation of Paris into a 'city of palaces.' But the process is plain enough. Any Government which meant to be more than 'Provisional' after that catastrophe, was under the double necessity of finding employment for labour and restoring confidence to capital. There is a Parisian proverb, that everything goes on well when the building trade does. But if the building trade in 1848 was to go on at all, the initiative in setting and keeping it at work must come from authority. This was felt so immediately by the revolutionary tenants of power at popular will, that a decree was passed by the Provisional Government, in the first hours of its brief existence (February 28, 1848), for putting in hand the work so long talked of and never done, the completion of the Louvre. Later in the same year, under the Government of General Cavaignac, a project of law for that purpose was brought before the Constituent Assembly, accompanied with detailed plans by the late architect Visconti, which, with some variations, have since been put in execution. The project in its main scope was adopted by the committee to which it was referred, and the details reserved for further consideration. It was resolved, as a first indispensable preliminary to the great work to be accomplished, to make a clean sweep of the whole jungle of small streets and alleys which lay between the Tuileries and the Louvre. That first great clearance, which struck, as it were, the key-note of all that followed, was decreed, as we have seen, by the Second Republic, and left to be executed, with all subsequent clearances, by the Second Empire. The completion within five years (1852-1857) of the new Louvre, achieving what had been so long projected, the connection of the Louvre with the Tuileries on the north side, had been talked and written of (with revolutionary pauses) ever since the days of Louis XV., and longer. With the completed work before us, it is curious to turn back to predictions like M. A. Bazin's in the '*Livre des Cent et Un*' (1832). 'They talk about adding to the Louvre the wing it

now wants. That will do very well to *talk about* in the debate on the civil list; but I fear no contradiction, either by words or facts, when I affirm that no such miracle will be witnessed by this century. The old palace of our kings will remain a torso.' M. Bazin reckoned without his Emperor and Prefect that were to be in the future—the modern Aladdin in palace improvisation, and his slave of the lamp.

What most excited admiration and what most provoked censure in the external and structural transformation of Paris under the Second Empire may be said to have been alike due to the despotic despatch with which it was accomplished. The grandeur and decadence of Prefect Haussmann kept exact and even pace with the grandeur and decadence of the third Napoleon. It was natural that the grandiose character of the results achieved should most strike foreigners, and the arbitrary and costly processes of their achievement should most be felt by natives. To build up a new city it was first of all necessary to pull down an old one. Shylock could no more cut next his debtor's heart without shedding Christian blood, than Baron Haussmann could cut into the heart of old Paris without cutting into the quick of the habits as well as habitations of tens of thousands of settled and contented citizens. No one could look round on the scene of the sweeping Imperial demolitions which preceded those of the Commune, without involuntarily taking a mental census of the myriads of modest existences which must have been arbitrarily displaced by them during the whole course of that edilical revolution. M. Edmond About, in a paper in the 'Paris Guide' (1867) entitled 'Dans les Ruines,' draws a touching picture of the domestic virtues exercised, the domestic affections cherished, and the humble fortunes honestly raised in one of those little family nests which fell thick and fast under the destructive and constructive vigour of Baron ex-Prefect Haussmann. And M. Victor Fournel tells of a friend who in ten years had been ten times compelled to change his residence. 'When I first knew him, he lived in the Rue des Mathurins Saint Jacques. From thence

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he was driven out by the Rue des Écoles. Next he took refuge in the Rue de la Harpe; the Boulevard de Sebastopol pulled his house down about his ears. Then he sought a new retreat behind the Odéon; the Rue de Médicis again forced him to take flight. In despair of making good his position on the left bank of the river, he crossed to the right. To the right bank also the Boulevard Magenta, the Boulevard du Prince Eugene, and five or six others, followed and routed him, for the tenth time, out of house and home.'

It is not, however, merely compulsory change of domicile, but compulsory change of *style* of domicile, that became a Parisian grievance under the Second Empire. Working men *en masse* were driven beyond the barriers. All classes above proletarianism and below opulence, *littérateurs*, professional men, and small *rentiers*—men to whom a *pied-à-terre*, at least, in Paris, was, as it were, their hold of life—found themselves, if they would not follow the manual operatives beyond the barriers, compelled by no remote consequence of the late improvements to pay largely increased rents for diminished comfort. M. Victor Fournel's friend, whose first lodging was in the since demolished Rue des Mathurins Saint Jacques, probably enjoyed in his old home a roomy and comfortable interior without a showy street exterior. If he had transferred himself to the new Rue des Écoles, raised on the ruins of his old Rue des Mathurins, he would have had to pay (we do not speak without book) about 100*l.* a year for a small set of chambers *au deuxième* in that street. Now, to old-fashioned Parisian notions of rent, in an old-fashioned quarter, such a figure for small-sized unfurnished apartments must appear *raide*. But it is evident that if half Paris was to be pulled down, and half the space it stood upon left vacant for the sake of opening fine broad lines of street in all quarters, fashionable or unfashionable, the rents exacted for sets of apartments in all quarters must be such as to repay, firstly, the cost of pulling down the old streets; secondly, that of building the new; and thirdly, the building value of the space liberally left unoccupied. Otherwise the speculation, so loudly proclaimed a good, necessarily must have

proved a bad one. But it was not so clear what value, except in more extensive views from their front windows, the surcharged *locataires* got for the increased rents they had to pay. They did not get more 'comfortable lodgings' in a large proportion of cases—indeed, quite the contrary. The façades of all the new lines of streets have an aspect as palatial as sculptured stone, zinc doing duty for bronze, and profuse gilding can give them. '*Tout est parfaitement et ennuyeusement beau,*' as some French traveller once said of England—i.e. everything that meets the public eye. But the interiors of this stately street architecture in many instances are no more palatial than their inhabitants are princely. Many of them are, in fact, from the economy of space and material, supremely uncomfortable, as compared with the more roomy and substantial, if less showy dwellings, of which so many existed in old Paris, and a good few exist still. M. Victor Fournel gives a serio-comic picture, confirmed by concurrent testimony from other quarters, of what he calls *ces abominable cages parisiennes*—modern Parisian houses, laid out, from ground-floor to garret, with the utmost economy of space and slightness of interior structure, in sets of apartments confined within the most limited dimensions practicable. And he sums up as follows:—

Parisian apartments, then, have the double demerit of being extremely dear and extremely inconvenient. One does not lodge there, one *roosts*, one encamps, as it were, between earth and heaven, subjected to all the constraints and all the servitudes imposed by the landlord; the *concierge*, and the fellow-*locataires*; one is always eager to leave them, whether to sally forth and seek in the street a little air, quiet, and repose—yes, really a little repose—or to vary one's afflictions by changing one's lodgings. Have people ever seriously reflected on the influence which this sort of habitation must inevitably exercise on the temperament, physical and moral, of all Parisians? Is it really believed that these things have no influence on that unquiet character, that nervous irritability, which render them the most mobile and capricious population in the world? Nothing is so sweet, refreshing, wholesome to the mind and heart, nothing so soothing and benignant, as the *chez-soi*. Without paradox, I am persuaded that the English *home*—that interior life so peaceful and comfortable, so isolated from



all the tumults outside in the tranquil household enjoyments—plays a great part in the prosperous social and political history of the nation, as well as in the patriarchal fecundity of their marriages. Where is the *chez-soi* possible at Paris? Refresh and restore yourself, if you can, in our card-board apartments, so *transparent to noise*, so surrounded, and as it were penetrated, on all sides by the pressure from without! Our municipal administration, in its laying out of new Paris, has suppressed only the material means of revolutions by removing paving-stones and the tangled intricacies of our old streets and lanes; but one principal moral cause of revolutions will be left subsisting so long as Parisians shall continue to roost in these *logis compartiments*—so long as *home* shall not have been transplanted to the banks of the Seine.

Without venturing to accept as universally applicable our author's complimentary tribute to English homes, or exactly supposing that he meant to apply universally his description of 'abominable cages' to all Paris apartments, we are inclined to think another description we have met with of Paris streets as 'whited sepulchres' may be of rather extensive application. Looking along these interminable dressed lines of front as far as the eye can reach, in all the new streets, avenues, and boulevards, it was impossible to suppress conjectures of what might sometimes lurk behind their sculptured cornices and profusely gilt balconies. It was impossible to suppose all their inhabitants born to dwell in marble halls. But the Parisian at all times might not be unwilling to *suppose* that this *was supposed* of him, and would rather pay for appearance without reality than for reality without appearance. *Volenti non fit injuria*. There is now only one street in Paris, says M. Victor Fournel—the Rue de Rivoli. Not content with having pushed its extended length from one end of the town to the other in one direction, it reappears, disguised under innumerable *aliases*, in every other. Yet a little while, and we shall no longer have any streets at all; there will be nothing but boulevards. In effect, under Baron Haussmann's jurisdiction, it was a mere question of time when every street still surviving might be called upon to show cause why it was not an avenue—every avenue why it was not a boulevard.

It has been said with some truth that the real Louvres of the present age—that is to say, the works into which the present age has really thrown its distinctive spirit and character—are such works of the Second Empire as the *Halles Centrales* (the great market), and the *grand égout collecteur* (the great sewer of Paris). Next to the great market and the great sewer we are disposed, with M. Fournel, to place the great hotels and the great cafés as the works most really monumental and palatial of the late Imperial régime—the dynasty of international exhibitions.

The striking contrast between the impotence of the architecture of these days when aiming at grand style, and its brilliant fertility of resources when it aims only at ostentation and luxury—between the art of the architect descending the rapid slope of decadence, and that of the decorative upholsterer not less rapidly advancing to perfection—is a contrast which often shows itself in the different aspects of the same building. Sufficient evidence might be found of this contrast in the new Louvre. Without, however, sending our readers back there, it may be enough to send them to the two new theatres recently erected in the Place du Chatelet, and to point their attention to the striking difference between the exterior and interior architecture of these buildings, between the deep decadence of architectural taste so visible on the one side, and the progress of elegance, convenience, and luxury so incontestable on the other.

‘I advise my readers,’ says M. Fournel, ‘to convince themselves of this by paying a visit to the *Café parisien* behind the Chateau d’Eau, the *Grand Café* on the ground floor of the Jockey Club, and the *Eldorado* in the Boulevard de Strasbourg. The first of these, with its vast dimensions, its statues, its caryatides, its marble walls, its mirrors on all sides reflecting its myriad lights, its fine fountain whose waters are ever playing on its rock of bronze, its joyous chimes which fritter the hours for its careless *habituels*; the second, decorated by the *élite* of our young painters and most brilliant *élèves* of the school of Rome; the third, with its *façade* enlivened with sculptures, its splendid *comptoir* set in a frame of delicately-carved wood-work, its two-storied rotunda begirt by sixteen arcades resting on tall and graceful columns, its gallery bordered by colossal figures with picturesque attributes, its cupola with enriched dial-plate on which the hours are marked by a circle of twelve nymphs, its balcony with open railings ornamented with masques and medallions; finally, its mouldings and gildings, displaying from base to summit their glittering arabesques;—these are monuments not to be forgotten as characteristic of new Paris.’

If monster hotels, cafés, and common sewers are to be taken as the modern *monnaie* for palaces, by parity of reason a monster opera-house may be taken as change—and no *small* change—for a cathedral. When the first Napoleon (as the St. Helena memorials have placed on record) projected the transfer of the Papal residence to the French metropolis, and the *travestissement* of the Supreme Pontiff into Bishop of Rome and Paris, he expressed regret that he could not transport to Paris the church of St. Peter's also—‘*il était choqué de la mesquinerie de Notre Dame.*’ If anyone as new to European culture in the present century as Voltaire's *Ingénu* in the last, were suddenly brought in front of that enormous edifice the new Opera House, with its external enrichments of marble, sculpture, and gilding, what could he think but that he had stepped from the Boulevard des Capucines into the ethnic forecourt of the metropolitan temple of modern French religion? Would he be far wrong? Of the three religions that divide France between them—the old creed of Christendom, with Notre Dame for its central Gallican seat; the modern cult of Plutus, with its pagan peristyle of the Bourse; and that of Pleasure, where opera and ballet have ample room and verge enough for their most advanced ritual in the magnificent new temple raised for it—which, is it supposed, can boast, at this day in Paris, the most zealous and regular votaries?

M. Victor Fournel, the always acute and trenchant, if somewhat cynical critic of the edilical exploits of the Second Empire in Paris, refuses to recognise any other than strategical motives for the main operations which have changed old into new Paris—the broad and relentlessly rectilinear lines of thoroughfare which have been driven through the entire length and breadth of the mediæval capital.

‘Let anyone study,’ says M. Fournel, ‘with the map before him, the general system of the new streets of Paris, he will soon perceive that it has been ordered expressly for the purpose of clearing the approaches of those public monuments which may again become, as they have often become before, rallying-points and strongholds of insurrection—for the purpose of cutting through populous and popular

quarters by lines along which military forces could operate with security—bringing all the parts of this great capital into easy communication, and forming links and connections by new and broad streets between all the important buildings, quays, bridges, interior and exterior boulevards, and the gates of Paris. Ten years hence it will be impossible to discover any point in any quarter of the town that is not confined, absorbed, annihilated between quadruple ranges of boulevards, converging towards them on the right and left, before and behind; ample vomitories, where whole regiments may deploy without difficulty, where artillery and cavalry may move and wheel at ease, where cannon, raking à *pleine gueule* these fine straight streets, traced just as could be wished for artillery practice, will sweep the stakes every stroke it plays. A goodly barrack will rise at every point of junction, and the forts will command the whole. The professors of barricades have henceforth rough work before them. The trade is spoiled. The twin streets Saint Denis and Saint Martin will never again, as in bygone days, lend themselves to facilitate the communications of insurgent blouses, and baffle the operations of regular troops. The Empire has been far too clever to pull down these picturesque twin *émeute*-factories. But it has thrust between them, throughout the whole breadth of Paris, from the Strasburg railway terminus on the north to the Observatoire on the south, that magnificent boulevard which, rejoicing in three successive designations, runs out its course, however, in one straight line, whether as Boulevard de Strasbourg, Sebastopol, or Saint Michel. As the Rues Saint Denis and Saint Martin, on the north side the river, are strategically neutralised by the Boulevard de Sebastopol cutting in between them, so the Rue Saint Jacques on the south side, which was the theatre of the most obstinate conflict between the regular and popular forces on the days of June 1848, is reduced to similar insignificance, in a military point of view, by the same grand line of thoroughfare running parallel to it under its third transfluvial designation of Boulevard Saint Michel. “This entire gigantic and splendid line of boulevard,” says M. Rudolf Gottschall, “may be regarded as a result of the political and strategical lessons given by the never-to-be-forgotten insurrection of June 1848 to all future French governments, and as an effective rectification of the unfavourable field for action on both sides the Seine which alone gave insurrection its ground of vantage against regular troops.” “From this point of view,” says the same writer, “the new boulevard may be regarded as providing an extended and unobstructed rifle-range at whatever moving targets along its entire length Revolution may set up to be shot at. On this arena, at all events, she is safe to be shot down.”

‘But the Second Empire,’ prophetically added the same writer, ‘is only thus secured from *émeute*, not from revolution. Who can answer how soon after the demise of the present Emperor (or a then unforeseen *Sedan*), these colossal boulevards may form the battle-field of Prætorians contesting the disposal of Empire?—whether street-fights may not come off there for the regency or the *war-portefeuille*?—whether Seleucidæ and Ptolemies may not throw the dice for the torn imperial mantle in bloody conflict on this arena, cleared for them by Imperial foresight?’

‘Heu hominum curas! Heu quantum in rebus inane est!’

Build walls to keep birds from cherry-trees—the birds will find their way there, build you how strategically soever.

## XII.

## THE LAND QUESTION IN FRANCE (1870).

1. *Enquête Agricole. Rapport à Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre Secrétaire d'État au Département de l'Agriculture, du Commerce et des Travaux Publics.* Par le Directeur de l'Agriculture, Commissaire Général de l'Enquête. Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1868.
2. *L'Agriculture et la Population.* Par M. Léonce de Lavergne, Membre de l'Institut et de la Société Centrale d'Agriculture. 2<sup>e</sup> Edition, revue et augmentée. Paris, 1865.
3. *Economie Rurale de la France depuis 1789.* Par M. Léonce de Lavergne, &c. 3<sup>e</sup> Edition, revue et augmentée. Paris, 1866.
4. *La Réforme Sociale en France, déduite de l'Observation comparée des Peuples Européens.* Par M. F. Le Play, Auteur des 'Ouvriers Européens,' Commissaire Général aux Expositions Universelles de 1855, de 1862, et de 1867. 3<sup>e</sup> Edition, revue et corrigée. 3 vols. Paris, 1867.
5. *Des Privilégiés de l'Ancien Régime en France et des Privilégiés du Nouveau.* Par M. d'Esterno. 2 vols. Paris, 1867-68.<sup>1</sup>

No documents have issued from the official press of France since the *cahiers* of instruction from the electoral assemblies of 1789 to their deputies to the States-General, which have set forth in such detail the complaints and claims of the most important interest in the country, as the voluminous returns and depositions now in process of printing as appendices to the official Report before us, which is addressed to the head of his department by M. Monny de Mornay, 'Director of Agriculture.' The instructed champions of the French agricultural interest (for the masses of the cultivators of the soil have hitherto shown themselves impressible only through their popular instincts) had long proclaimed loudly that agriculture, regarded as a national productive interest, was playing somewhat the part of dupe in

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, January 1870.

the grand military, financial, and commercial drama of the Second Empire. It is now placed on official record as a fact, that land in France has fallen in value during the last twenty years, amidst the fabulous and factitious rise of so many speculative undertakings.<sup>1</sup> To us in England there is nothing new in the spectacle of the sort of prosperity (and its collapse) which builds itself up on overstrained credit and anticipated resources. What is new in France, at least since the days of Law and the Mississippi scheme, is the degree in which the speculative spirit in all classes has been stimulated to excess by the patronage given and the initiative assumed in high places. What is newer still, and may inspire some hope of seeing the modern Idomeneus yet reign over the modern Salentum in his *second* manner (!) is the implied acknowledgment we have now before us, on the part of the governing power itself, of the false direction hitherto given to much of its past action, and the official recognition, in the successive chapters of M. de Mornay's Report, of all the principal agricultural wants and grievances which the ablest representatives of French agriculture had been setting forth, seemingly to no purpose, for these ten or fifteen years.

There are some points of parallelism, though more of contrast, in the past and present situation of the English and French agricultural interests. Their position is so far parallel, in relation to other productive and industrial interests, that they have both *touched bottom*—have both lost, and have both at length acquiesced in losing, every privilege for their

<sup>1</sup> M. Monny de Mornay, in his Report, while admitting the fall of value sustained within the last twenty years by landed proprietors, of large or middling size, in France, asserts—but cites no evidence and an experienced inquirer (M. Léonce de Lavergne) says that all the evidence he has himself collected is against it—that the value of small properties has not ceased to advance during that period. It is not very easy to understand how this should be, while the value of landed property in the larger portion of its bulk has fallen, and while the numbers of competitors for the smaller lots of landed property have been in rapid course of reduction during the same period, in consequence of the artificially stimulated migration of the rural population to the towns, and the not less artificially stimulated diversion of their savings to other than landed investments.

products that could be represented in the invidious light of monopoly. The most marked point of contrast between the history and fortunes of English and French agriculture is that, though the French more than the English have been specially a people of cultivators, the agricultural interest had ceased in modern times in France, while it has continued through every age in England, to be a power in the country. This was the effect of that perverted policy which transformed the nobles of France into courtiers, and severed every link of the natural relations between the lords of the soil and its cultivators. The former may be said to have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, when they submitted to share the servile prodigalities of the court rather than the prosperity of the country. The latter were mostly severed and isolated—except, in some remoter provinces, such as Anjou, where commenced the peasant war of La Vendée—from those who should have felt it their honour, no less than their interest, to act the part of their natural patrons and protectors; and found thrown on their shoulders the double weight of the public burthens of the state, and the local dues and feudal service to the nobles. The rural classes were, in fact, the helpless and hopeless helots of the whole privileged classes above them. These latter consisted not only of old nobles and new *anoblis*, but of all who had scraped together sufficient capital to take refuge in the towns. And here it may be noticed that France abounded in towns, and especially in small towns, more than most other countries in Europe, mainly owing to the manifold oppressions of the country. The refugees from the rural districts—their *tailles* and *corvées*—invested the capital they brought with them, which never found its way back to the soil, in the purchase of some small office. ‘Whenever your Majesty,’ said a courtier to Louis XIV., ‘creates an office, God creates a fool to buy it.’ One tribute only to the primary importance of agriculture was paid by the Physiocrats or Economists of the last century—a tribute which that poor down-trodden interest might well have spared, or might well have regarded as insult heaped on injury.



Quesnay and his followers considered agriculture as the sole source of real and substantial wealth, and inferred from that assumption that it should be the sole subject of taxation. Justice has been done upon that theory by later generations of political economists; but, after all, the best *reductio ad absurdum* was made, at the epoch of its first appearance, by the comic deductions drawn from it in Voltaire's '*Homme aux Quarante Ecus*.'

With the great Revolution the day of revenge for ages of isolation and oppression might seem to have dawned on the cultivators of the French soil. And so it did, as far as the range of their own conceptions went; since they found themselves encouraged by the revolutionary movements of the capital—followed when they had not been preceded by the other great towns—to wreak their smouldering sense of wrong in wide-spread outrage and violence on the personal representatives of the system under which they had suffered; to shake off the feudal and fiscal burthens which had weighed so heavily on their shoulders; and to seize the opportunity of acquiring at a nominal price the lands thrown into the market by the extensive confiscations of ecclesiastical and emigrant property. It is a mistake, indeed, to suppose that the widely-prevalent division of landed property amongst petty proprietors now existing in France, first originated at the Revolution: 'It is now known,' observes M. Léonce de Lavergne, 'that the numbers of petty landed proprietors have been much less increased since the Revolution than had been imagined.' Arthur Young, writing in 1789, states: 'The number is so great that I am inclined to suppose more than one-third of the kingdom occupied by them.' M. Léonce de Lavergne, an eminent practical agricultural authority, affirms that there is not a greater extent so occupied now.

This vast body of petty peasant proprietors, who under the old régime had been the most embarrassed and burdened class in the country, was the class that profited most immediately by the Revolution. While the depreciated assignats virtually wiped out their debts, the purchases of land, paid

for in assignats, increased their property, and the famine prices of their produce enriched them amidst general misery. Economically and materially, therefore, this was the class that gained most amidst the public confusion; while the *bourgeoisie* of the towns, who had shunned all contact with it, and shifted all their burthens on its shoulders, were the class that suffered most. But the same events, as Tocqueville has justly observed,<sup>1</sup> which were ruinous at the time to the *bourgeoisie*, 'tended ultimately to place power in its hands, and soon enabled it to convert a great part of the public fortune to its sole use.'

Politically, the Revolution left the agriculturists no farther advanced than it found them, and indeed threw them back in point of public importance and influence by decimating such natural chiefs as they had. The saying that '*La Revolution a désossé la France*' was more applicable to the landed interest than to any other. True, its aristocratical backbone had stood it in little stead before the Revolution; but it may be said since to have had no backbone of class organisation at all—to have consisted mainly of scattered and isolated 'uncountry gentlemen,' destitute alike of all rural occupation and political importance, and of mere masses of *manœuvriers propriétaires*, as a writer before us terms the lowest class of peasant proprietors.<sup>2</sup> This last is the single type to which the theorists of infinite divisibility of land would willingly reduce all landed property—a type politically powerless, as necessitating all but total ab-

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. v. p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> M. Léonce de Lavergne, in his *Economie Rurale de la France* (p. 371), gives the following description of the actual condition of these *manœuvriers propriétaires*:—'The population of the Puy-de-Dôme has increased since 1789 from 400,000 to 600,000 souls or upwards. Before the Revolution, thirty-seven farms, of an average extent of 80 or 100 acres, divided between them the territory of the commune of Vensat. At the present day the same surface belongs to six hundred proprietors, possessing on an average less than 6 acres. The middle class has disappeared from the district; the whole population cultivates the soil by manual, mostly spade labour—a painful toil drawing after it rough and violent manners. The inhabitant of the Limagne is extremely laborious, but his effective industry by no means equals his bodily activity.'

sorption in manual labour—with no ambition but that of annexing, by hook or crook, by toiling or borrowing, another bit of land to cultivate without skill or capital—with no politics but hazy traditions of *taille* and *corvées*, and instinctive devotion to the dynasty of the Napoleons, as somehow connected with their liberation from those old oppressions, and somehow securing Jacques Bonhomme against the still dreaded spectre of their return.

The rule we shall proceed upon, in attempting to give English readers some notion of the present situation of French agriculture, in its main bearings on the entire industrial and social economy of France, is to assume only such evils existing in that situation as we find explicitly recognised in the official Report before us. It may safely be taken for granted that the high-placed author of that Report would be rather disposed to extenuate than set down aught in malice of the actual condition of the important interest concerned. And, in fact, M. Monny de Mornay does his best, as in official duty bound, to palliate the darker traits of that condition which have been brought out in evidence; and contents himself, for the most part, with enumerating the various remedial measures which have been suggested, without committing himself or his department to a choice amongst those measures. There are only two points on which M. Monny de Mornay hazards a decided judgment—and these are, the progress made by French agriculture within the last thirty years, and the ratification explicitly or implicitly given by French agriculturists to the abolition of Protection on their staple products of corn and cattle. Upon the former of these points it is remarked by a leading agricultural authority already cited,<sup>1</sup> that it is very true that French agriculture has made great progress during the last thirty years, but that the review of that progress should have been extended to at least fifty. During the last half-century French agriculture has doubled its products; but during the twenty years succeeding the Revolution of February 1848 agricultural progress has been very sensibly slackened. The

<sup>1</sup> Léonce de Lavergne, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 1868.

proper business of the *Enquête* was to investigate and to endeavour to trace to its causes the slackened progress of that latter period.

Our readers may require some introduction to the authors whom we shall have chiefly to cite in illustration of our present subject. We begin with the one least likely to be previously known to them—M. d'Esterno, the scope of whose work, as may be partly gathered from its title, is to show how privilege, when supposed to be slain in the overthrow of the old privileged classes, only transmigrated into new forms—forms still oppressive, though less unequally and iniquitously oppressive to agriculture. M. d'Esterno is not only an agricultural statistician, but a philosopher and humourist; his humour sometimes a little getting the upper hand of his philosophy. He is, as he allows to peep out, by descent a member of the *old* privileged class. There have always been, he says, members of that class who have disapproved the enforced obligation of idleness on the old noblesse. For example, Dulaure (the historian of Paris) cites a *Sieur d'Esternod, gentilhomme et poëte* under Louis XIII., who, notwithstanding, or rather perhaps by reason of, that double qualification, found himself temporarily reduced to a state of embarrassment closely approaching indigence. Necessity inspired him with evil thoughts, which, he says, he resisted, but which he was not sorry, in his quality of poet, to make known to posterity in the following rhyming reflections, the style of which may account for the rest of his poetry having been 'let die':—

'Je maugréais mon être, et détestais, en somme,  
Le père qui m'avait fait naître gentilhomme,  
Disant que, si le ciel m'eût créé roturier,  
Je saurais, misérable, au moins quelque métier.'

M. d'Esterno describes his two very noticeable volumes, as the fruit of forty years of studies—studies which bear evidence of having been followed in the open air fully as much as by lamplight. He has in former years taken an active part in the struggles of the agricultural interest with

the powers that be, and the powers that have been, in favour of its representation in chambers of agriculture on a footing of equality with chambers of commerce. He ascribes the ill-success which has been experienced in effecting that object, and other objects in the pure interest of agriculture, to the manner in which that interest, under the elder Bourbons, mixed itself up with reactionary politics.

It was on the lordship of land that the privileges of the old régime had been founded ; the attempts made, under the Government of the Restoration, by the introduction of the *double vote* and other such measures, to render the great landowners predominant in the elections, inspired universal distrust of all proposals from that quarter. When a new generation—our generation—arose, declaring that it took up the cause of agriculture solely as a productive interest, its representatives received no credence. They were answered, ‘ You carry the same flag ; you have put a new dye upon it, but the old colour still peeps through. You give yourselves out for agriculturists, but you are nothing better than aristocrats !’

King Louis Philippe was deeply imbued with this prejudice. From his infancy he had found himself, and all related to him, objects of hostility to the old *privilégiés* of the soil ; and he had conceived a profound aversion for the landed interest altogether, which he never succeeded in separating in his mind from its *ci-devant* representatives. Louis Philippe was the King of the *tiers état*—that is to say, of the bankers, merchants, manufacturers and lawyers. He regarded with deep displeasure the establishment of the Central Congress of Agriculture in 1844 ; and when it decided to hold regular annual sittings, the King flew into a violent rage, sent for the Duke Decazes, the zealous President of that Congress, and said, amongst other things, to him, ‘ Do you think I have not enough of two Chambers, and that I want a third ?’ Those who wished to please him never talked to him of agriculture. The Count de Gasparin sometimes tried to introduce the subject. This *bored* the King, who said one day to him—‘ Voyons, M. de Gasparin, laissez-nous donc tranquille avec votre agriculture !’

M. Léonce de Lavergne,<sup>1</sup> another of the authors we have selected for citation on this subject, is already known to agricultural inquirers in this country by a good English translation of his *Essay on the Rural Economy of England*,

<sup>1</sup> Since dead.

Scotland, and Ireland, with notes by a Scottish Farmer.<sup>1</sup> M. de Lavergne was stopped short in the official and parliamentary career on which he had entered under the Orleans dynasty by the events of February 1848, and again in his professional labours in the Chair of Rural Economy at the National Agronomical Institute, by its arbitrary suppression in 1852, in the first days of the Imperial Government. Its re-establishment in substance, if not in precise form, is now generally demanded. To this demand the Government, it is said, consents; and a Commission, nominated by the Minister of Agriculture, has prepared a project which fixes the seat of the new institute at Paris. 'And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.' M. Léonce de Lavergne might briefly be described as the Arthur Young of France, and he would certainly take the description as a compliment. Like his British precursor, an experienced agriculturist and acute observer of the practical bearings of public policy or impolicy on the progress or decline of agriculture, he has repeated, under less perturbed circumstances, Arthur Young's task of 1789, that of examining the actual condition of agricultural and pastoral production in each of the great natural divisions of the French territory, and of forming a comparative estimate of their products with those of this country. Like Arthur Young, he keeps his eyes resolutely fixed on the soil, and regards political vicissitudes chiefly as they affect the every-day interests of its cultivators.

While from these antecedents M. de Lavergne might be supposed likely to fall naturally into the rôle, more or less, of a *frondeur* of the powers that be, M. Le Play—who figures last, not least, on our list for citation—may be supposed, as an International Exhibition Commissioner, a Councillor of State, and finally a Senator, not less naturally to rank among the *satisfaits* of the Second Empire. But he is none the less disposed to be severely critical on the whole modern

<sup>1</sup> *Essai sur l'Economie Rurale de l'Angleterre, de l'Ecosse et de l'Irlande.* Par M. Léonce de Lavergne. Quatrième édition. Paris, 1863. We would also refer our readers to an essay on this work by Mrs. Grote, in her *Collected Papers* (London, 1862).

fabric of centralisation and bureaucracy. To the majority of English readers M. Le Play is probably best known by his successful superintendence of the arrangements of the great Paris Exhibition of 1867. But he has earned higher distinction, among philanthropic inquirers into the industrial and social condition of the most numerous classes throughout Europe, by his persevering researches, during a long series of years, into that condition.

In M. Le Play's first work, entitled 'Les Ouvriers Européens,' which was published in imperial folio in the first French Exhibition year, 1855, and which received in the following year the prize of Statistics from the Academy of Sciences, he *photographed*, to use his own expression, the most diversified types of operative life throughout Europe. The volume contains thirty-six detailed delineations of work-people in different countries, taken on the spot in the most widely remote regions and social conditions—from the shepherd on the slopes of the Ural, and the peasant of Southern Russia, to the emigrant reaper of the Soissonnais, the laundry-man of the Paris suburbs, and the chiffonnier of the Paris streets.

The fairly favourable reception by French readers and critics of M. Le Play's second work now before us—'La Réforme Sociale en France' (in which he deduces from the materials amassed in his first, many important conclusions as to the prevalent evils of the present industrial and social state of France, and their remedies) marks an epoch of progressive opinion and progressive tolerance on subjects on which inveterate popular prejudice had hitherto seemed to render all discussion useless. Political experiences, humiliating to political philosophy, within the last score of years, have made French thinkers of all parties sadder and wiser men, and have rendered them greatly more disposed than formerly to listen to serious and sincere social doctrines from any quarter, however contradictory to previous popular shibboleths.

The first and the most important official admission in the Report before us is that of an evil which may be regarded as

a principal source of almost all the other evils which especially afflict French agriculture and industry—the division of landed property, at each succession, into portions often too small for good cultivation, and often at some distance from each other. ‘In many departments,’ says M. Monny de Mornay, ‘the average extent of separate portions of land goes down to 20, 15, or 10 *ares* (about the 50th part of an acre), and even less.’ This is an old evil, the most incontestible (and the most contested) evil of French peasant proprietorship.

From the excess of *morcellement* result loss of time and labour, restraint of free rotation of crops and variety of culture, frequent lawsuits between contiguous proprietors. These evils are sensibly felt; yet *morcellement*, far from being stayed in its course, is in constant progress. There are many causes which conduce to this result: first of all, the separate acquisition of small portions of land; but above all, the compulsory division of landed property, which takes place between the co heirs at each succession.

The evidence given before the Commission seems to be quite unanimous as to the reality and seriousness of this evil, whatever may be the differences of the witnesses as to the remedy. M. Monny de Mornay proceeds to state in the Report that—

Many of the depositions taken in the Nièvre, the Allier, and the Puy-de-Dôme, claim entire liberty of testamentary disposition, leaving fathers of families the discretionary power of dividing their property in equal or unequal parts among their children. Others, without going so far, have expressed the wish that a larger share of property should be left at free disposal by will. Thus, in the departments of Savoy, the recent recollections of the Sardinian code inspire regret that those provisions of that code have been abolished which excluded *absent sons and daughters* from a share in succession to landed property, while providing indemnification for them in money or moveables.

It is often in vain to reason with national passions, and the inveterate prejudices they implant. Otherwise it might not be difficult to show that the revolutionary legislators of 1793, and the subsequent framers of the 826th article of the



Code Napoléon, shot quite beside and quite beyond their mark in their law of equal succession.

The law passed by the National Convention on March 7, 1793, which entirely abolished the right of free testamentary disposition of property in France—a right which had been unreservedly recognised only a year or two before by the Constituent Assembly—is one of the few legacies of the ‘dreary dawn’ of the Reign of Terror, which have been since implicitly, and with a sort of unquestioning unanimity, accepted by all Frenchmen, or, at least, by all Frenchmen apprehensive of being suspected of retrograde or reactionary politics. It is difficult to believe that this one legislative specimen of democratic arbitrariness could have escaped the reprobation passed on every other of the same epoch, had not the subsequent policy of the First Empire and the Bourbon Restoration given alarm to opinion by partial measures of attempted aristocratical reaction. The revival of rights of primogeniture under the first Napoleon and the elder Bourbons, in the shape of *majorats*, created exclusively in favour of the families of the new or old nobility and the possessors of large estates, rallied opinion at once in support of the revolutionary law, which had at least the merit of applying equally to *la grande* and to *la petite propriété*. It is one of those subjects on which party spirit animates a whole nation, and on which, till quite lately, few Frenchmen who desired to retain a shred of Liberal reputation dared to speak reason, or would endure to hear reason spoken.

Mr. (now Sir Henry) Maine remarks, in his able and valuable treatise on ‘Ancient Law,’ on the whimsical manner in which 1793 restored, in a supposed democratical interest, those feudal entails which 1789 had just abolished. The Constituent Assembly established entire testamentary freedom. The Convention substituted compulsory equal division of all property amongst children.

There is no broader distinction than that which exists between a system of free testamentary disposition and a system, like that of the feudal land-law, under which property descends compulsorily in prescribed lines of devolution. This truth appears to have been lost

sight of by the authors of the French codes. In the social fabric which they determined to destroy they saw primogeniture resting chiefly on family settlements; but they also perceived that testaments were frequently employed to give the eldest son precisely the same preference which was reserved to him under the strictest of entails. In order<sup>1</sup> therefore to make sure of their work, they not only rendered it impossible to prefer the eldest son to the rest in marriage arrangements, but they almost expelled testamentary succession from the law, lest it should be used to defeat their fundamental principle of an equal distribution of property among children at the parent's death. *The result is, that they have established a system of small perpetual entails, which is infinitely nearer akin to the system of feudal Europe than would be a perfect liberty of bequest.*<sup>1</sup>

The reader is reminded of the failure of Jack in the 'Tale of a Tub,' to make himself as unlike as possible to Lord Peter, by tearing his coat to rags instead of simply stripping it of superfluous trimmings:—

As it is in the nature of rags to bear a kind of mock resemblance to finery, there being a sort of fluttering appearance in both, which is not to be distinguished at a distance, in the dark, or by shortsighted eyes; so, in those junctures it fared with Jack and his tatters, that they offered to the first view a ridiculous flaunting, which, assisting the resemblance in person and air, thwarted all his projects of separation, and left so near a similitude between them as frequently deceived the very disciples and followers of both.

It is justly and acutely observed by M. Le Play, that the French legislators of 1793 made a great mistake in their method of carrying out the Jacobin programme, 'War to the château—peace to the cottage!' Their law of succession, in effect, made war on both; and the cottage, in the long run, proves the less able of the two to sustain such warfare.

The legislators—observes M. Le Play—who, in 1793 as in 1803, instituted or confirmed a régime designed to undermine gradually *la grande propriété*, did not establish a conservative system for *la petite propriété*: they did not even leave it the benefit of those customs by which it had been protected from time immemorial. More disposed in all direc-

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Law*, by H. S. Maine, p. 225.

tions to destroy than preserve—not less powerful but more equitable than the revolutionary legislators of other countries—they passed the whole of rural property under the levelling rule of *forced division*. The consequence, unforeseen yet inevitable, of this system could not be any other than the simultaneous disorganisation not only of the proprietary, but of the peasant classes.

In the old Constitution of the Île de France and the Orléanais *forced conservation* was employed for the exclusive succession of property in the possession of noble families, while *forced division* was imposed on that of the families of the citizens and the peasantry. That system, therefore, was instituted for the benefit of the higher classes, and violated the principle of distributive justice in its very foundation. It was otherwise in Normandy and in the provinces of the centre and south of France, where the voluntary transmission of landed property to the eldest son was a custom common to the nobles, the bourgeois, and the peasantry; where accordingly it did not imply in the minds of any part of the population any idea of constraint, of caste, or privilege. In those provinces the recognition of the *droit d'aînesse*, as regarded landed property, assumed for all families alike a character eminently social and conservative. If in 1793 the legislators elected in those provinces had received from their constituents the mission of creating a new régime, systematically planned to pull down the great proprietors from their position of superiority, they should have been led by that levelling principle to a totally different mode of proceeding from that which was adopted under the inspiration of Parisian opinion. They should have simply reversed the previous application of the *coutume de Paris*. In other words, they should have applied the principle of forced division to the property of the nobles, that of forced conservation to the property of the bourgeois and the peasantry. Under those conditions, the *droit d'aînesse* would have indeed preserved the character of injustice which it often had in the past; but it would have attained the end aimed at in its adoption. And this is precisely the order of things which has prevailed in Russia, where the Government had long directed its efforts to diminish the influence of the great proprietors. Forced division has been imposed on these latter for estates as for titles, while in the organisation of the village communes, which existed till 1863, the peasants transmitted their property for the most part under a regimen of forced conservation. Even in France it is thus that were permanently preserved those little peasant properties which since the Revolution have been partially absorbed into the great estates.

We must here, however, remark that the effect of the French revolutionary law of succession is exaggerated by supposing it, as M. Le Play does, to *produce* in the richer parts of France that absorption of small into large properties, which it proves itself, even by the admission of its apologists, powerless to *prevent*. In a district of Normandy, with which M. Le Play's descent and connexions make him well acquainted, that absorption may be considered as a fact accomplished:—

In those parts of France in which the actual division of small estates, on which there are central residences and farm-buildings, continues impracticable, the parties interested easily realise their inheritance by dividing amongst them the price offered by capitalists for the paternal domain. Under this form the whole population has at length submitted itself to the constraint exercised by the law. However, as the new purchasers can only turn their property to account by farming it, the old race of little proprietors is gradually supplanted by a race of small farmers. Sometimes small contiguous holdings, bought by one capitalist, can be thrown to advantage into one large farm; and *la petite culture* is destroyed at one blow with *la petite propriété*.

The fertile plateau known by the name of *pays de Caux*, bounded by the right bank of the river Seine and the shore of the Channel, affords an example of a transformation of this kind accomplished since the Revolution. The descendants of the old proprietors occupy now only as farmers the soil of which the property has been acquired by the rich moneyed men engaged in manufactures and maritime commerce on the borders of this fertile region, in the towns of Rouen, Louviers, Elbeuf, Bolbec, Havre, Fécamp, and Dieppe. The sales effected on the occurrence of each succession prevent ruinous partitions, cultivation continues to improve, notwithstanding these periodical mutations; and the public treasury is replenished more than ever. But this transformation of property has inevitably drawn after it the disappearance of an *ensemble* of sentiments and social relations which, growing mainly out of the social order of things, formed at bottom the principal force of the country. Pauperism has introduced itself in its most formidable character, while social harmony and family fecundity have come to an end along with the old races of proprietor cultivators.

This change in French agricultural economy, in some of its most flourishing districts, seems no way distinguishable

from that which has taken place so extensively in England, and to be referable precisely to the same cause. That cause has been stated with perfect clearness by M. Léonce de Lavergne in his instructive Essay on the Rural Economy of England, already referred to.

‘With us a cultivator who possesses anything of his own,’ says M. Léonce de Lavergne, ‘prefers in general to remain a proprietor rather than become a farmer. It is the reverse in England. There were formerly numerous small proprietors in that country, who formed an important class in the State. They were called yeomen, to distinguish them from the country gentlemen, who were designated as squires. This class of yeomen has almost entirely disappeared; but it must by no means be supposed that a violent revolution has destroyed them. They have sold their property and become farmers, because they have discovered that they could turn their capital to more profit by doing so. A time will come when a good many small French proprietors will make the same discovery. [By M. Le Play’s account, they have made it already in a portion of Normandy.] As landed capital returns at most 2 or 3 per cent., and farming capital, if judiciously employed, should bring 8 or 10, the calculation is easily made of the comparative advantages of the two investments.’

We have here, in few words, the whole rationale of the absorption of smaller into larger landed properties, so far as that absorption is a gradual, natural, and unforced process. Under any law of succession the increase of commercial wealth, the possessors of which are willing to pay something of a fancy price for land, would have produced the same result in the commercially prosperous parts of France as in England. The ill effect of the French law of succession is seen and felt less in the mere fact of absorption, as in Normandy, of the smallest landed properties—which by our author’s own account is accompanied by improved cultivation, and therefore by prosperous farming—than in the artificial and adverse circumstances under which that absorption is often made to take place. Where it does not take place, other sources of impoverishment are opened for the poorest and most helpless classes of peasant-proprietors by the uncalled-for action of law, and the intervention of

legal functionaries in family arrangements which should be left to family affections and interests.

'The class of peasants à *famille instable*,' says M. le Play [he uses that designation in contrast with families permanently settled and located], 'does not exist in countries where heads of families can transmit their property freely. It appears in company with *gens d'affaire*, wherever prevails the régime of *forced division*, and wherever custom and tradition have no longer sufficient force to maintain the habit of integral transmission of landed property. In France, before the Revolution, unstable petty proprietors had already become numerous under the influence above indicated. Since the law of the 7th of March 1793 they have become more numerous than amongst any other European people. They exist, however, in considerable numbers in those districts of Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany contiguous to our territory. They are to the present day almost unknown in the east, north, and centre of our continent.

'Destitution of orphans,' says our author, 'does not take place in France only in families living on the wages of their daily labour, but in those which had succeeded in mounting the first steps of the ladder of property; and their ruin is caused precisely by the law and legal formalities established, in distrust of parental dispositions, for the protection of minors. This deplorable consequence results every day from our régime of succession under circumstances which are a deep disgrace to our civilisation. . . . In the north and east of Europe the succession to the property of a little proprietor leaving as his heirs children in their minority is burthened by no public charge. When the deceased parents themselves have not provided for its administration, an assembly of relations almost always takes place, which entrusts to one of its members, or to some other friend of the family, the care of administering without costs the paternal property till such time as the children shall be of age to manage it themselves. In France the legislator has not thought that the matter could be arranged so simply. He has laid down as a principle that public functionaries afford better guarantees than family friends for the preservation of the property of minors. The result of this pseudo-parental solicitude, in the case of small successions, has been the ruin of those on whose behalf it is exercised.'

It is curious how a bad law may keep enlisted in its favour a force of prejudice long invincible by reason, when it has owed its origin to national passion, and finds its support in political tradition and prejudice and professional

interest. 'The privileged classes of the old régime,' says M. d'Esterno, 'had the mania of conforming landed property to a single type—that of *la grande propriété*. It was not thought fit by the bigots to that type that the peasant should be a proprietor. At this day the opposite doctrine prevails; it is not thought fit by the new generation of exclusive partisans of peasant proprietorship, that there should be any proprietors, or any cultivators, but peasants.'

We have now in France 600,000 landed proprietors, the average taxation on whose properties does not exceed a halfpenny a year! What can be expected of such properties and such proprietors? There are not in France more than 60,000 proprietors possessing 180% of income. Of the remaining 7,400,000 proprietors, 3,000,000, or two-fifths, are exempted from personal taxation on the plea of indigence; the remaining 4,500,000 possess on an average 7 hectares (about 12 acres), and enjoy about 16% of income. So straitened a situation precludes all possibility of intellectual culture; the petty proprietor is a manual agricultural labourer, constantly bent over his furrow, living a life of privation, ignorant of the science or art of agriculture beyond the simplest routine, and having no time to acquire the very elements of skilled pursuit of his occupation. Such is the *beau idéal* of agricultural economy aimed at by legislators and legists—at this day in great part attained—and which its admirers do not despair of seeing attained completely. The net result may be given as follows in few figures:—The simplest legal process costs in general from 16% to 20%. If the object litigated is worth, say 2,000%, the law expenses absorb the hundredth part of the value; if 200% a tenth, if 20% *the whole*. This is the perfection of the *genre* in the eyes of the men of law. What, in fact, is the drift of the furious clamours of that class against large or moderate properties? To bring them down to that happy equality of *morcellement* which shall enable the lawyer to swallow them without chewing in one suit and at one mouthful.

M. Le Play gives an official bill of costs, covering six or seven pages of his Appendix, levied on a property of the value of 900 francs left by a deceased peasant. After defraying those costs, exactly 30 francs 37 centimes were left for equal division among his children.

'It is an unquestionable truth,' he concludes, 'that in small successions of orphan minors forced division is a source of inevitable ruin. The facts recounted are no accident—they form the rule. The

like abuse of legal formalities has been brought to my notice in all our provinces, and the judicial statistics present it even under graver aspects. It was stated, in the Report of the Garde des Sceaux to the Emperor, in 1852, that on 1980 sales of property under 500 francs of deceased persons, made by official intervention, producing altogether 558,092 francs, the legal expenses had been 628,906 francs—that is to say, 12 per cent. above the proceeds of the property thus forced to sale.'

Other evils take place where landed properties, already Lilliputian, are still further divided; any of the heirs being entitled by the existing law to enforce such division. And here we are enabled to put in the witness-box M. Léonce de Lavergne, who is otherwise disposed, on grounds which we cannot consider as quite consistent with his own admissions, rather to pooh-pooh all agitation for testamentary freedom in France. 'The real inconvenience of the law of succession,' says M. Léonce de Lavergne, 'consists in the indefinite division of small properties. Even here, however, a modification of the law is scarcely necessary. Custom, sound jurisprudence, and good sense suffice greatly to attenuate the evil.'

Let it be granted, for the sake of argument, that the evil of the law of succession may be greatly attenuated (as M. Le Play shows that in some parts of France it has been) by the resistance perseveringly opposed to it by 'custom,' 'sound jurisprudence,' and 'good sense.' Still, as that author also shows, the resistance thus opposed has its fatal limits, and the subaltern *gens d'affaire*, interested in working the law at the cost of those concerned, are in the end too strong for all three. Besides, when grave inconvenience is admitted to result from an arbitrary enactment, the work of no less arbitrary and violent authors, it would seem that 'good sense' and 'jurisprudence' were best employed in joining their forces for its repeal,<sup>1</sup> in order that 'custom' might

<sup>1</sup> A petition for the repeal of the present law of succession, and the establishment of entire freedom of testamentary disposition of property, was presented to the French Senate in March 1866, to which are attached the signatures of a hundred and thirty leading members of all the higher branches of trade and manufactures at Paris.



resume its natural sway, and dictate testamentary dispositions in harmony with family interests, as modified by local circumstances, freed from the present pettifogging legal and official intervention. But though M. Léonce de Lavergne, in many passages of his instructive volumes on the rural economy of France and England, concedes all the facts adduced as constituting the case for repeal, he retains the superstitious dread which has so long withheld French Liberals of the old school from laying a sacrilegious hand on this ark of the revolutionary covenant. 'The law of equal division,' he exclaims, with a sentimental vehemence very unusual to him, 'is the flesh and blood of France; nobody can lay a hand upon it without danger.' Yet presently he says, 'I am much struck with the inconveniences of forced division as applied to properties of small or middling size. I believe that these periodical disturbances greatly contribute to the periodical *malaise* of their possessors—to the debts which weigh on them—to the forced sales to which they are subjected. . . . Amongst the effects of the law of succession there is one effect which cannot be condemned too strongly—that is, *la division parcellaire*'—[the division of landed property into small separate lots, often at a considerable distance from each other, and only accessible, as it were, by trespass on the similar strips or parcels between them]. 'For my own part,' he says elsewhere, 'I should see no fundamental objection to a régime of unlimited freedom of testamentary disposition. That régime has good effects in England and the United States. If the French law on the subject had to be re-made, it would be a doctrine deserving consideration.' And why should not the French law be re-made, or rather un-made, so far as it has overshot the legitimate scope of legislation altogether? What is there in the date of March 7, 1793, which should taboo the subject of such legislation to all posterity?

'The state of inferiority,' says M. Le Play, 'in which agriculture is kept by the whole effect of our political and social institutions (and here we may remark that this inferiority has by no one been illustrated in more copious detail than by M. Léonce de Lavergne himself,

in his comparison of the agriculture of France and England) is brought out prominently in a characteristic trait of our present manners—in the propensity of agriculturists amongst us to quit their profession. There is a striking contrast on this point between modern France and other great European States, the citizens of which latter, without ceasing to be agriculturists, and without depriving themselves of the repose necessary for advancing age, may raise themselves to the highest degree of influence in the province or the State.

‘Those thinly scattered families of large landed proprietors, which have preserved down to our days their existence on their domains, and the relations established with the populations round them in the sixteenth century, are, at the death of each head of a family, subjected to periodical crises, and exposed by those crises to inevitable disintegration and destruction. This dissolving influence acts more energetically still on families which have been recently led to engage in agriculture by the attraction offered by the possession of land to men enriched in other professions. The proprietor of a rural domain has not with us the power of attaching to himself an associate-heir; he would besides, in doing so, be making an unjust sacrifice of the interest of this latter to that of his other children. These, in fact, after having enjoyed since they quitted the paternal roof all the fruits of their own independent labour, would be entitled to come in at the death of their father, and claim a part in the improvements made on the estate since the epoch of their departure; the labour devoted to those improvements and to the support of his old parents would therefore have been so devoted *en pure perte* by the heir. This flagrant injustice of our law of succession creates an obstacle, at every step of our agricultural industry, to the continuity of labour and domestic traditions.’

According to our author, the effect of the forced division of property is not less adverse to the permanence of commercial than of agricultural traditions and establishments. The natural authority of heads of houses is annulled by a law which predestines, in spite of them, the house itself to be broken up at the decease of its head. The natural growth and gradual aggrandisement of families, carrying on concerns founded by ancestral enterprise from generation to generation, is arrested by the iron grasp of the law, dividing their capital and paralysing their industrial or commercial power at each succession.<sup>1</sup> In anticipation of these arbitrary inter-

<sup>1</sup> The following statement, which we find in the Report of a Birmingham

ventions of law and its myrmidons at the period of their decease, fathers of families often prematurely wind up concerns which they might otherwise have continued to conduct beneficially for themselves and their children, with the aid of such of the latter as they might think fit to associate with them as partners. Age loses the honour of prolonged activity and utility ; youth loses the advantage of initiatory association with the experience of age.

‘Our law of forced division,’ says M. Le Play, ‘opposes an insurmountable obstacle to the foundation of those powerful commercial houses which are more than ever one of the essential elements of the prosperity of a nation. So long as this law subsists, we shall never again see raise themselves amongst us those great individual existences which developed themselves from time to time under our old régime, notwithstanding influences of another order hostile to them under that régime.

‘In commerce, more than in other branches of production, the present régime destroys in the germ all greatness which might found itself on the accumulated efforts of several generations of commercial men. A capitalist who buys a landed estate or manufacturing establishment at one of those sales which continually take place on the death of the head of a family, finds on the soil, or amongst the surrounding population, sufficient indications of the traditions he has to follow ; but in commercial concerns those traditions are entirely lost on the retirement or death of a merchant whom the law of his country has deprived of the power to select and set up an heir to continue his work. The new spirit so industriously inculcated on us by lawyers opposes, therefore, a permanent obstacle to the extension of our commerce. A methodical inquiry would easily elicit abundant evidence on this point. The two foremost commercial nations of our time enjoy testamentary liberty ; but amongst us, if there are still to be found some houses raised to a high position by the labours of several successive generations, we may be assured beforehand that that eleva-

Artisan to the Society of Arts on the Paris Universal Exhibition, may be considered with some probability as connected with this subject :—

‘I was provided with an order to view the works of MM. Lefauchaux and Co., extensive manufacturers of guns and pistols ; but here, where I anticipated the most instructive and interesting lessons of all, I experienced the huge disappointment of finding the place closed, and not a man at work. A death in the firm had thrown the concern into liquidation, and it was being prepared for sale ; and as no other manufactory of the same extent existed in Paris, the only opportunity I had of the kind was lost.’

tion has been due to sentiments the source of which is no longer to be found in our race. At Paris the richest banking-houses which inherit the labours of successive generations are all of Jewish and German origin, or else their members are descended from families expelled by the repeal of the Edict of Nantes, which had preserved in foreign countries the old French traditions.'

The evil educational effects of the law of forced division on the views and habits of youth are, according to M. Le Play, not the least of their moral and social mischiefs.

It is the most important function of manhood and old age, broken in as they have been to labour by the feeling of their social obligations, to inculcate the same habits on young persons, by repressing in them the instinct of idleness and sensual enjoyments. This result remains always uncertain under the régime of forced division. Under that régime the youth of the wealthier classes finds itself invested with the right of dissipating in guilty sloth the resources accumulated by their ancestors, so that the salutary influences of labour are preserved only amongst the poor, who are not in a position to derive much use from it for themselves and society. This has the additional inconvenience of attaching the idea of constraint to labour, and of presenting exemption from labour in the light of an enviable condition. On these several grounds it becomes a source of as fatal weakness for our country as would be a conquest giving a hostile people the power periodically to disorganise the whole economy of our workshops and factories.

When we come to the chapters in the Official Report before us on Agricultural Capital and Credit, Labour and Wages, Improvement of the Soil, and the general situation of the several branches of agricultural production and the several classes of the agricultural population, we find ourselves still encountered everywhere by the effects of the same 826th Article of the 'Code Napoléon'—the imperial second edition of that revolutionary *Law of Entail*, as Sir H. Maine characterises it—which, by enabling all the co-heirs of the smallest peasant-property to demand the actual division of the land amongst them, amounts, says M. Monny de Mornay, to 'an abuse reproducing itself daily, and threatening to render the cultivation of the land impossible' (p. 16). Let us just say in passing, however, that we do not quite see how

a demand can be exactly termed abusive which is made precisely in terms of an unrepealed law, and in fact only carries out, *à outrance*, the precise object of that law. What is indisputable is, that a cause which, so far as its operation extends, threatens to render the cultivation of the land impossible, must to that extent deter capital from landed investment, and must have favoured its diversion of late years to all those many and various *valeurs mobilières*, brought out under such alluring forms and such influential patronage, and which have since turned out, as we need not remind our readers, in so large a proportion *non-valeurs*.

‘Whenever,’ says M. Léonce de Lavergne, ‘it is proposed to import the improved processes of English agriculture, we are stopped short by the want of accumulated capital, which nothing but association can furnish. Such great proprietors as we have left have for the most part little taste for agricultural undertakings; most of them have more land than money; and great fortunes, like all fortunes in France, are subjected to *those permanent causes of dislocation which render persevering efforts difficult*.’

M. Léonce de Lavergne proposes, in the last resort, joint-stock associations, to imitate the processes of agricultural improvement employed in England, and for which in France individual agriculturists fail to find capital. Strange that agricultural authorities such as he is should evade looking the question in the face—*Why* do individual agriculturists in France fail to find capital? ‘The extreme division of properties,’ says the Report, ‘and the *morcellement*, often excessive, of the portions of land of which they consist, form great obstacles to the execution of combined works of irrigation to the extent that would be desirable, and the existing legislative and administrative regulations impose forms too complicated, and entail expenses too considerable.’ The same thing may be said of drainage, for the promotion of which the Imperial Government offered the landowners a loan of 100,000,000 francs, only 500,000 of which have found employment.

The diminished amount of sheep-farming in France is ascribed in the Report before us to the same cause which is

recognised in that document as obstructing all other agricultural improvement on a large scale—the progressive *morcelement* of property and the extension of *la petite culture*, which has rendered impossible, on many points of the territory, the formation and feeding of large flocks. ‘It must not be forgotten,’ says M. Léonce de Lavergne, in his work on the ‘Rural Economy of the British Islands,’ ‘that this valuable animal not only gives its meat and wool to the farmer, but further enriches him by its manure; and all this return is obtained while ameliorating the soil which produces it. This is, in some measure, the perfection of rural economy.’

The publication of the Agricultural Statistics of the United Kingdom for 1868 shows a marked increase in the number of cattle and sheep over that of 1867, and, as regards the latter, exhibits even a greater superiority of England to France than when M. Léonce de Lavergne gave his agricultural verdict on the same side. In the United Kingdom the comparative numbers in 1868 were—

In England—cattle, 9,083,416; sheep, 35,607,812.

In France—cattle, 14,197,360; sheep, 33,281,592.

It must be remembered, as M. Léonce de Lavergne observed in his work above cited, that ‘the apparent equality, or approach to equality [in the number of sheep], conceals a serious inequality. The thirty-five millions of English sheep live upon thirty-one millions of hectares, those of France upon fifty-three. To have proportionately as great a number as our neighbours, we should have sixty millions.’

It is but fair to add that the Report affirms an increase in the number of milch cows, without, however, giving any statistics of that increase. M. Léonce de Lavergne doubts the fact of the increase of horned cattle generally, while he considers that of corn cultivation within the last forty years as fully established. In the south of France we find it stated by the same authority that not half the number of cows or oxen are kept which would be necessary for properly manuring and ploughing the soil. In the south *milk* is a product

even less in demand than *meat*. Milk and butter, however, are beginning to enter into consumption instead of oil and lard; but it will be long before their use becomes general, and in the meanwhile cattle-breeding in that division of the country will lack those encouragements which have so powerfully contributed to extend it in England and in the north of France.

But if the ovine race is necessary to the progress of agricultural production, still more is the human race. *Men* are failing French agriculture even more than sheep, by the confession of the Official Report before us:—

The diminution of the numbers of children in families is established on very positive evidence as a general fact by the detailed inquiries made in all our departments, and more particularly in the richer departments. Speaking generally, a progressive decrease in the fruitfulness of marriages has been manifested for some time past in the rural districts. The peasant-proprietor dreads to see his property divided at his death amongst several children. He calculates more than he formerly did the burthens which would be entailed upon him by having a numerous family to bring up, and he prefers to deprive himself of the aid he would receive from the labour of his children when grown up, uncertain as he is of keeping his children round him and of seeing them devote themselves to agricultural labour.

This uncertainty is one of the ‘effects defective’ of the present law of succession, which forbids the father of a family to transmit his landed property undivided to that one of his children who might show himself best fitted to aid and continue his agricultural labours.

To the direct effect of the French law of succession in checking population (be that effect deemed good or evil) Tocqueville testified as follows in his Correspondence of 1857, with reference to the fact cited from the census of the previous year, of an actual excess of deaths over births in 1854 and 1855, which, however, had been years of war and scarcity:—‘I am convinced that amongst us the division of the soil, and the law which enforces equal partition amongst children, have had much to do with the slowness of development of the population.’

When the late Victor Cousin many years ago first visited England, and saw the fields divided, as they had been from time immemorial, by hedgerows, it is related of him that he jumped at once with French agility to the conclusion—‘*Voilà un peuple arrêté!*’ Anyone who observes the present operation of the ‘repressive check’ in narrowly limiting the numbers of French families may be tempted to repeat the French philosopher’s exclamation—‘*Voilà un peuple arrêté!*’ If ultra-Malthusians, they will rejoice of course in the practical conquest over the pestilent principle of the ‘geometrical progression’ of human, beyond vegetable production. But intelligent Frenchmen of the present day have many misgivings whether Malthus may not be helping them (as St. Antonio helped the traveller on his horse) *too much*.

‘France,’ says one of the artisans<sup>1</sup> whose Reports on the late Paris Exhibition are published by the Society of Arts, ‘is degenerating in her procreative faculty. It is quite a common occurrence (in the working class) to have no children, generally only one, and quite a rarity to have two. The flower of the land are sacrificed to military glory. All suffer the conscription, and the authorities reject the feeble and ailing, and retain the strong and florid to perish by the multiplicity of accidents that beset a soldier’s career.’ Military life, and to some extent artisan town life, is in general vicious celibacy. Add to this, in its adverse effect on population, that which, in the higher as well as lower social strata, may be termed vicious marriage. M. Le Play gives the following testimony respecting the habits of the Paris work-people:—

At Paris, side by side with excellent types of operative character one finds work-people abandoned to vices of which the idle rich had, in former times the miserable monopoly. In particular, one finds classes of work-people, who, preserving a sort of order in their disorders, organise their existence independently of marriage, and impose on their concubines a life of assiduous labour, while they spend daily at the cabaret and in other places of still worse resort sums which would suffice to secure the wellbeing of a numerous family. Deeply imbued with the revolutionary spirit, bitterly envying all social superiorities,

<sup>1</sup> W. Bramhall, saw-maker, Sheffield; p. 47.



they would admit no intervention of benevolent counsels by their employers to suggest a more judicious use of their wages. They rarely even subscribe to a society of mutual assistance ; and rather than give up any portion of their accustomed debauches, they expose themselves unaided to every privation in times of sickness. But on the occurrence of periods of slack work, or in the advance of age, they criticise bitterly the social organisation which leaves them in want. Their favourite theme is censure of the egoism of the superior classes, on whom with singular inconsistency they would impose the duty of assistance, while refusing them the corresponding rights of direction and control. The examples set by certain employers are no better ; so that, even in the régime of labour, the elements of moral life begin to fail in Paris, as in those capitals of antiquity which sank gradually to extinction in their own disorders.

We have dwelt chiefly, more than we meant at starting, upon a single article of French civil legislation. Our apology must be that we attach the first importance to that article in its direct and indirect influences on French agricultural and social economy, and that a like importance is implied in the place of honour given to it amongst the topics of the Report before us.

We must not, however, be supposed to represent equal division of property amongst children as of mere revolutionary origin in France, any more than peasant proprietorship ; or either the one or the other, in themselves, as proper objects of economical or political reprobation. All depends on the economical and political circumstances of different countries, or of different districts of the same country. What we have denounced as mischievous, and what is admitted as mischievous, with whatever reserves or qualifications, by all who have approached the subject with unprejudiced minds, whether in France or England, is the gratuitous (no, not *gratuitous*) meddling of lawyers and functionaries with arrangements best and most safely left to heads of families themselves, and the arbitrary fitting of all varieties of custom and circumstance to the same legislative bed of Procrustes—the same ‘hard and fast’ rule of nominal equality and real inequality. It is admitted by M. Léonce de Lavergne himself, citing M. Le Play, that ‘the

*dissolving* action of the civil code exerts itself much less on large properties than on small ones.' What worse can be said for the action of a code, the authors of which contemplated the preservation of small properties and the subdivision of large ones?

We may here remark that in France precisely that part of the population which it might be most desirable should augment its numbers, is that which refuses most resolutely and systematically to do so; while the part of the population lowest in the scale, and least capable of enterprise, is the part which continues Hibernically 'obedient to the first command.' The stationary or retrograde peasant-proprietor of the Creuse propagates his vegetable existence, multiplied and deteriorated at each succession. The prudent and thriving Norman shrinks from submitting his little landed property to compulsory cutting-up, by allowing himself more than one or two children. 'It is generally,' says Tocqueville, 'in the most miserable families that are found the most children. From the moment that a family begins to grow rich, the number of children decreases. Parents desire to leave their children the advantages they themselves possess, and that each of them shall have a fortune about equal to that which they have themselves acquired. For this purpose, parents must not have more than two or three children at most.'

The exigencies of military service (in briefer phrase, the conscription) are enumerated in M. Monny de Mornay's Report as 'one of the incessant causes of the deficiency of labouring hands in the rural districts,' and as 'withdrawing from those districts for many years their youngest and most robust labourers.' The emigration of the rural populations to the towns is next enumerated as 'an evil *still more real*, and which has been signalled in a general manner as affecting all parts of the country.'

As regards this latter evil, which is singularly asserted to be more real than the conscription, we may observe that there is nothing new or peculiar to France in the fact that the present is 'the Age of great Cities,' or that great cities

attract in the present age a larger proportion than heretofore of the population formerly scattered throughout rural districts. What is, however, peculiar to France under the present reign, though not without precedent in the reign of the last absolute successor of Louis XIV., is the artificial development given of late years, by the acts of authority, to urban at the expense of rural industry and existence.

'It may safely be stated,' says Tocqueville,<sup>1</sup> 'that during the sixty years which preceded the Revolution, the numbers of work-people more than doubled at Paris; and Louis XVI., by greatly extending the privileged exemptions of the Faubourg St Antoine from the fiscal legislation of those times, aided to the utmost of his power the accumulation of an immense working population in that suburb, never dreaming that his *proletaire protégés* were soon to strike the decisive blows at his throne and head.'

The old strongholds of revolt, St. Antoine, St. Denis, and the Temple, have been new-boulevarded and bridled; and Paris of the present day, well bitted and barracked, is no longer the political mistress of France. But Paris is more than ever, thanks to the prodigious public works of the Second Empire, the metropolis of proletarianism, the spoilt child of administrative solicitude—more than ever populous, multifarious, and omnivorous.

The consumption of Paris was estimated, more than ten years back, from statistics published by the Prefecture of the Seine, to amount to a full tenth of the total amount of production of articles of food and drink in the whole of France. From this estimate M. Léonce de Lavergne drew the inference that the average ration of eatables and drinkables per head in Paris was four times the average enjoyed per head by the rest of Frenchmen. But if the average feeding of the Parisians is equal or superior to that of any other great town in Europe, the alimentation of the peasantry, on the other hand, says the same writer,

is inferior to that of almost any other people. They neither get meat, nor wheaten bread, nor wine; rye-bread, black bread, potatoes, and water, are the food of a good third of the population of France.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.*

It is true that, according to the official optimism of the Prefecture of the Seine, they find in the purity of the atmosphere, in the moderate exercise of their muscular force, in the habit of taking regular and temperate meals, elements extremely useful to the equilibrium of the vital functions. Thanks much to the Prefecture of the Seine! But if to these advantages they could add a little modicum of meat and wine, it is probable they might not find themselves the worse for it. Even that country air, for the purity of which they get credit, is often vitiated by low and confined habitations, by the vicinage of dung-heaps or of unwholesome marshes.

The altered proportion of the rural and town population throughout Europe and America, so far as it is due to the natural growth of wealth and commerce, is, as we have said, not in itself to be complained of, but to be duly noted as characteristic of the age. It can only form a grievance when, as the Report before us admits to be the case in France, an agricultural country finds itself, in addition to the already exhausting drain of the flower of its rural youth by the conscription, subjected to the powerful attraction of the best of its remaining labouring hands from the rural to the urban labour-market by the unprecedented public expenditure, under the Imperial régime, on the improvement, or rather reconstruction, of Paris and other great towns. 'There has been often expressed during the course of this inquiry,' says the Report before us, 'the wish to see discontinued, or at least considerably slackened, the public works now carrying on in the towns, *which certain persons even go so far as to consider as unproductive.*' When ministerial departments 'go so far' as to place such complaints on record without protest, it would seem that they must have become urgent, and hopes may be entertained that the balance of administrative equity between town and country, so seriously deranged, has at last some chance of being redressed.<sup>1</sup>

Paris is the land of promise (promise often broken—the perennial source of revolutions) to the upper tens of thousands of white-handed aspirants to place, as well as the lower hundreds of thousands of hard-handed aspirants to light work and high wages.

<sup>1</sup> Since this hope was expressed, Baron Haussmann has abdicated his destructive and constructive omnipotence over the metropolitan prefecture.

The excessive multiplication of public offices, combined with the destruction of family professions, caused by compulsory division of property, has profoundly modified the old state of things. Fathers no longer able to transmit to their children the occupation they have themselves followed, naturally cast their eyes on those official situations which are now numbered by thousands, and graduated in scale to all ambitions and all appetites. At this day these situations are the principal source of influence, and for the last three-quarters of a century have alone created stable existences in a social state periodically ravaged by revolutions. Private manners and feelings by degrees follow, and even exaggerate the direction impressed on the conduct of families by the force of law and policy. A young man would seem to confess his own inferiority by following his father's profession; and if, in accordance with those deplorable principles which govern the formation of marriage connexions amongst us, he should seek to improve his fortune by a matrimonial alliance, he would indeed put all the chances against him by following the paternal profession, instead of soliciting for some official situation. In this respect, as in many others, France offers a marked contrast to English opinion. In France prudent fathers, now that they are no longer able themselves to create a career for their children in the circle of the family connexion, must seek support from those who have the disposal of official loaves and fishes. No circumstance has more contributed to the abasement of the old character of the Franks. Those who would raise that character in the esteem of other races feel a sort of humiliation in the spectacle of successive French governments, beset by this 'ugly rush' to public functions, and equally powerless to repress or satisfy this new species of mendicancy. (Le Play, vol. iii. p. 333.)

The chapter in the Report before us on agricultural capital and credit seems addressed to meet such slashing attacks on the make-believe measures adopted of late years in aid of both, as we find, for instance, in M. d'Esterno's first volume, and which have been widely echoed in the evidence and returns received by the late Commission of Inquiry. Next to the carrion-crow brood of local limbs of bureaucracy and lawyers in the lowest walks of practice, who, on the death of every French peasant proprietor, swoop down on his poor landed leavings, and in too many cases divide the oyster amongst them, leaving the simple co-heirs the shells, M. d'Esterno's favourite aversion is *la haute banque*—

the banking monopoly held at Paris, and represented by the Bank of France and its dog-in-the-manger attitude towards the banking requirements of the provinces, which it will neither supply itself nor suffer to be supplied by others. Of the new privileged classes—bureaucrats, lawyers, bankers—the last, according to M. d’Esterno, are not those who levy the least tribute on the general community. They have contrived to maintain intact the moneyed monopoly conferred on them—centred in the *Banque de France*—by the old imperial law of 1807, which prohibits as usurious the direct negotiation between private individuals of loans at a rate of interest above 5 per cent., reserving to themselves (the Parisian banking interest) the privilege of making advances to commerce at whatever rate they please! This law, as M. d’Esterno justly says, is the palladium of usury, the tutelary power of the privileged usurers of the *haute banque*. While it prescribes a maximum price for a commodity (money) fairly amenable to the laws of trade, like any other commodity, it exempts from observance of that maximum the one special profession which deals habitually in that merchandise! The Bank of France, by its predominant influence in high places, has hitherto succeeded in preventing the establishment of provincial banking establishments on an adequate scale, and with numerous branches, such as Scotland first set the example of in this country.

‘In 1837,’ says M. d’Esterno, ‘I solicited the sanction of Louis Philippe’s Government for the establishment of the Bank of Dijon, which would have included several towns in the same district. In addressing myself to M. Lacave-Laplagne, then Minister of Finance, I was innocent enough to point out that the union of several towns in one sphere of operations would liberate provincial commerce from the charge of commission hitherto incurred in the discount of its bills at Paris. The banker-financier answered me at once in a very decided tone, “But we don’t want country banks to play the part of *the Bank*.” I had the simplicity to ask *Why*, and of course got no second answer.’

The Report adventures neither attack nor defence of the Bank of France, and consigns to its Appendix a modest and

passing notice of the repeal of the law of 1807 as one of the measures suggested in the evidence taken before the *Enquête*. But it administers in its text a valuable indirect lesson to the monopolists of the Parisian banking system by a concise and clear account of the banking system of Scotland, and the similar system nearer at hand in the Channel Islands. 'The Scotch banks,' writes M. Monny de Mornay, 'cover the whole country with their branches, and those branches, which in 1819 only numbered 96, had reached in 1864 the imposing figure of 591. For a population of three millions and a half this gives a branch-bank for every 5,000 souls. The like ubiquity of these establishments is to be found in the island of Jersey, where 63 banks, or rather *comptoirs* of deposit and discount, do not issue more than between two or three millions [francs] of notes, but set in motion commercial operations of ten times that amount.'

M. Léonce de Lavergne attaches only a secondary importance to the mere machinery of banking accommodation in France. The artificial causes which withdraw capital from landed investment lie deeper, in his opinion, than any defectiveness, confessed as it is, of that machinery. The most powerful of these is the attraction held out of late years to large and small capitals by *public loans*, whether inviting subscriptions in the name of imperial or municipal administrations. 'Five or six thousand millions of francs have, during the last fifteen years, been diverted from their natural destination to be spent unproductively in military armaments or expeditions, and in works of luxury. These loans to defray war establishments and town embellishments have opened the wide and deep wounds through which has flowed the life-blood of agricultural capital. Add to the thousands of millions absorbed in these loans thousands of millions more which have been sunk in all sorts of delusive enterprises at home and abroad.' M. d'Esterno calls attention to the fact that the *Crédit Foncier*, one of the two associations started for the special purpose of making advances of capital on landed securities, largely supported by its advances the *Société Immobilière* of Paris in its

enormous building speculations in that city. We all know what has become of its speculations and of its shareholders.

The *Crédit Agricole* is the most recent association founded for the special aid of agriculture. Without going so far as to say with M. d'Esterno that its sole object was rather to prevent than promote agricultural credit, we must admit that some of its clients and protégés were, to say the least, rather curious representatives of the agricultural interest. Amongst these were the directors of the French opera, the Austrian railways, and the provision trade of Paris. M. de Mornay adduces, in defence of the *Crédits Foncier* and *Agricole*, figures to show that a very large proportion of the advances have been made on provincial agricultural and industrial securities. And he retorts on their assailants by hinting that one main reason why agriculture has to pay higher for the advances made to it than commerce, is that agriculturists are not so punctual as mercantile men in fulfilling their engagements.

We have dwelt thus at length upon the results of the Agricultural Inquiry in France, not simply on account of the importance of the subject itself, but also on account of the lesson derivable from the revolutionary experiments and economical experiences of our nearest continental neighbours. That lesson may be stated in few words as a lesson of distrust of legislation aiming to revolutionise all existing proprietary conditions—to produce an universal Utopia of peasant proprietorship—in short, to reform by decapitating the body of interests having a joint stake in the soil. What the example of France shows is, that such legislation may fail to render universal, or even to considerably increase, in extent and prevalence, the form of property which it takes under its exclusive protection, while it is pretty sure to produce such legal and administrative friction in its working as in many cases to rub away altogether the petty properties it was meant exclusively to establish, and to end in effecting their ultimate absorption in larger estates—all the compulsory legal and fiscal intervention in the matter being dead



loss to everybody, except indeed swarms of the lowest legal and fiscal functionaries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In an article entitled 'Equality,' written by Mr. Matthew Arnold in the *Fortnightly Review* for March 1878, to establish two positions, which English readers, less French in their proclivities than he is, may be pardoned for thinking that he has not completely made out, viz. that one of the two great obstacles to our civilisation is British nonconformity and the other British aristocracy; he nevertheless arrives at the same conclusions respecting the French law of succession to property as it has been the object of the foregoing article to demonstrate. 'The faults and inconveniences,' he says, 'of the French law of bequest are obvious. It tends to over-divide property; it is unequal in operation, and can be eluded by people limiting their families; it makes the children, however ill they choose to behave, independent of the parent. To be sure, Mr. Mill and others have shown that a law of bequest, fixing the maximum, whether of land or money, which any one individual may take by bequest or inheritance, but in other respects leaving the testator quite free, has none of the inconveniences of the French law, and is in every way preferable. But evidently these are not questions of practical politics.'

'I have generally found,' says the late Nassau Senior, in his *Conversations with Distinguished Persons*, 'the system of forced division unpopular in Belgium. They complain not only of its political but of its moral effects, as diminishing parental influence. It does not, however, seem to be so mischievous economically as it is in France. It is acted on with more good sense. In France the co-heirs frequently divide every field and even every acre of vineyard. In Belgium they generally sell the whole, and divide the price. This, however, is expensive. The Government takes seven per cent. of the purchase money for stamps; the notary three per cent., or, if no bargain be made with him, five per cent. more. It is seldom, I am told, that a purchase can be made at an expense of less than ten per cent. And as two and a half per cent. is considered a fair return, the four first years' revenue is absorbed by the expenses of transfer.'

## XIII.

PREVOST-PARADOL AND THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Elisabeth et Henri IV.* 1595-1598.
2. *Essais de Politique et de Littérature.* 3 vols.
3. *Quelques Pages d'Histoire Contemporaine: Lettres Politiques.* 4 vols.
4. *La France Nouvelle.* Par M. Prevost-Paradol de l'Académie Française. Dixième Edition. Paris, 1869.<sup>1</sup>

PREVOST-PARADOL is the second of French diplomatists who have died, within the last three-and-twenty years, by their own hands, and whose deaths have happened in coincidence and in supposed connection with the presaged fate of personal and dynastic policy. The first was M. Bresson, who had been French Minister at Madrid during Louis Philippe's Spanish-marriage intrigues, pregnant with such fatal consequences to the reigning houses of both France and Spain.<sup>2</sup> In the second instance of strange and sudden death

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, October 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Amongst the documents plundered from the French palaces in February 1848, and published in M. Taschereau's *Revue Rétrospective* of that revolution year, was a very remarkable confidential letter of the Prince de Joinville to the Duc de Nemours, dated from the fleet off Spezzia, November 7, 1847, from which we translate the following passage:—"The death of Bresson has struck me like a fatality [*m'a funesté*], and I fancy it has had the same effect on you. Setting aside the unfortunate effect produced at Naples, where the laws are so severe against suicide, what I apprehend most is research into the causes which may have produced this unhappy event. Bresson was not ill; he executed his purpose with the *sang-froid* of a man determined on death. I have letters from Naples from Montessuy and others, which leave me in no doubt about the matter. He was exasperated [*ulcéré*] against *le Père* [King Louis Philippe]. He had held strange language about him at Florence: "the King is inflexible, he no longer listens to any counsel—his will must carry everything before it," &c. All this will not fail to be repeated, and—which I regard as our great danger—the action *le Père* exerts on all subjects will be put in the strongest light—an action so inflexible that, when a public man who has committed himself on our side cannot overcome it, he has no resource left but suicide."—*Revue Rétrospective*, 1848, No. 31, p. 481.

now before us it is impossible to say what effect the startling arrival of the war news from Europe may have had on a sensitive mind, coupled with a frame already in a state of suffering from unusually intense heat in a foreign climate. Prevost-Paradol's published writings, however, of two years previously, prove that he had long regarded war with Prussia as a question only of time. Had his bodily health, under the burning sun of Washington, been in its normal condition, it is hard to believe that the mere fulfilment of his own predictions could have so affected his mind as to have driven him to seek refuge in suicide from the possible consequences, whether to his country or to himself, of military and political calamities, which could not then be contemplated as inevitable, least of all by Frenchmen. Whatever indeed might ensue could only by the most malignant ingenuity be made to reflect discredit on a man whose Liberal literary antecedents had occasioned his selection by a professed Liberal cabinet to bear the olive-branch from Imperial France to the great transatlantic Republic. Even if the new Minister at Washington had come to think M. Ollivier's Liberalism the hollow and broken reed it has since proved, and his own position, by consequence, more or less a false one, the late example of another literary Imperial convertite *relapsed* might have assured him that the French Liberals would receive him with open arms again, whenever, like Sainte-Beuve, he returned to his *premiers amours*.

From our passing notice of Prevost-Paradol's death we turn to the labours of his life, which obtained for him before the middle period of manhood the position of a great publicist—to say nothing of that of an Academician—due mainly to his brilliant contributions to the newspaper press. From causes which perhaps may count amongst the perils of French politics, but which are certainly sources of singular distinction to French political writers, those writers exert an individual influence, and acquire an individual reputation, to which the system of anonymousness precludes any parallel in English journalism. The gradual recovery of its freedom of late years by the French newspaper press has been due in

great measure to the distinguished ability and independence of individual journalists ; while the full recognition of those qualities has in like measure been due to the publication of the names of French newspaper writers at the foot of their articles. That publication was rendered legally compulsory by a law passed by the National Assembly of the short-lived Republic of 1848, on the motion of a certain M. de Tinguay, whose name is not otherwise illustrious. Whatever its origin, we have always regarded its effect as favourable to the individual weight and influence of the higher class of writers, whose contributions to the press have mainly or exclusively raised them to reputation. Of these, *facile princeps* in late years was Prevost-Paradol.

The peculiar faculties which fitted Prevost-Paradol for his literary conflict with power have been a traditional distinction of French athletes in that arena from Pascal to Voltaire—from Voltaire to Paul Louis Courier (a name little remembered now) and Cormenin, and from these (we should have added before some late escapades) to Edmond About. Frenchwomen were said to owe their tripping elastic step to the dire necessity of acquiring the art of saving their delicate *chaussures* from the pitfalls and puddles of French street-pavement, as French street-pavement was of yore. In like manner, French writers have had to learn the art of harassing power by a light ironical handling of its perverse doctrines or more perverse practices. From the *Provinciales* downwards, the best weapon of French polemics and politics has been a keen and polished irony against authorities, whether spiritual or secular, whose forte was not reasoning, but silencing reason when it became seriously offensive. Prevost-Paradol was the last of a long line of French writers whose sarcasms cut with razor keenness into those who wielded 'the axes and the rods which awe mankind.' It is quite a peculiar art of writing, for which there is really no demand in a free country, where neither writers nor readers have had any occasion to acquire the skill or taste for ingenious and indirect modes of conveying censure on powers that be. As Frenchmen are the best cooks for extracting

exquisite flavours out of dubious viands—as they are the best dancing-masters for extracting artificial graces out of movements in which natural grace is no ingredient—so are they the most accomplished literary artists in turning ‘diseases to commodity’—forging the most effective weapons against power out of its own jealous restrictions, and telling it *ses vérités* in turns of phrase adroitly avoiding to call a spade a spade or a rogue a rogue. Such literary fencing, indeed, with the ‘master of thirty legions’ generally ends one way: those who are adepts in it are themselves apt to get tired of tolerance, and wish to assure themselves that they have cut their tyrants to the quick by provoking some hasty stroke of vengeance from high places. Thus Chateaubriand, apparently to refresh the public memory of his rupture with the first Napoleon on occasion of the murder of the Duke d’Enghien, got inserted in the ‘*Mercur de France*’ (in 1807) that covert but audacious parallel of the age of Napoleon with the age of Nero (and, by implication, of Tacitus with Chateaubriand) which caused the instant suppression of the ‘*Mercur*.’ Thus Prevost-Paradol, in 1866, found in Gulliver’s voyage to Laputa a prototype less stately, but not less insulting to the Second Empire, of the depraved taste of France for the Imperial régime and its organs, in the court lady whose story is told in that voyage—

‘Très belle, aimée par les plus galants hommes, qui s’enfuit pour aller vivre avec un palefrenier. Elle est dépouillée, battue, abêtie un peu plus tous les jours : mais c’en est fait, elle y a pris goût et ne peut être arrachée à cet indigne amant.’

This was followed, in like manner, by the instant suppression of the ‘*Courrier du Dimanche*,’ a short imprisonment of the author, and moderate fines on himself and publisher. It may be questioned whether either Chateaubriand or Prevost-Paradol would have been quite pleased by the policy of entire forbearance on the part of the power attacked.

In a very brief biographical notice in a monthly periodical, which has the merit of being founded on personal acquaint-

ance with Prevost-Paradol, we find the following passage from a letter written by him to an English friend in 1868 :—

I envy your country, to be busy only with such questions as the Irish difficulties and competition of Parliamentary parties ; while we are here struggling for life in the midst of foreign and internal perils. German unity abroad ; universal suffrage, domination of the illiterate classes, and absolute power of a slumbering madman at home : such are the diseases of my country, by the side of which your troubles sink into insignificance.

Waiving all question as to our English exemption (since 1866) from ‘the domination’—potential at least—‘of the illiterate classes,’ we must say, with reference to the above application of such a phrase as ‘slumbering madman,’ that Napoleon III., like every ruler of France since her revolutions, had slumbering madness to manage in the French nation, and did manage it with success for a longer period than any previous French ruler. If he failed at last, and wrecked his dynasty in his failure, it was less by indulging any individual mania of his own than by indulging a notoriously universal and inveterate mania of his subjects. Whatever right dispassionate foreigners may have to visit with reprobation his unprovoked raid on Germany, passionate Frenchmen—and all patriotic Frenchmen were more or less inflamed with passion in that direction—have no right to denounce it, and in fact, speaking generally, have not denounced it, unless on the score of deficient preparation and pretext. The determination to draw the sword on Germany rather than see Germany complete her national union had been incessantly inculcated by M. Thiers in the Legislature, and by Prevost-Paradol in the press, for at least four years before, in an evil hour, it was put in execution by the Emperor’s Government. Alexis de Tocqueville, whom we always have to quote for calm speculation on the turbulent vicissitudes, remote or recent, of French politics, declared repeatedly that, whenever any ruler of France should give the word to march on the Rhine with a definite aim of re-conquest, the whole nation would rise and march on the Rhine, as it had done before.

In the sudden direction of the force of France again on the Rhine, with an object which, if not defined, was understood—and the more groundless the pretext the better understood the purpose—Napoleon III., we repeat, made himself the instrument of the known passions of his subjects (doubtless with the view of diverting those passions from dangerous internal objects), much rather than made his subjects the instruments of any passion of jealousy or appetite of aggrandisement arising spontaneously in his own breast.

Again, foreigners have a much better right than Frenchmen to bring the objection against the policy of Napoleon III. that it was a *policy of surprises*. In a lively dialogue of the date of 1864, in Prevost-Paradol's 'Quelques Pages d'Histoire Contemporaine,' between A, representing the public, and B, the author, the latter remarks that the designs of the Imperial Government are a mystery, 'which neither you nor I have power to penetrate, nor legal right to control.'

A. That's just what oppresses me with a constant sense of uncertainty. I feel like a man rowing in a boat with his back to the bow, without knowing where the steersman is taking him to—and reduced to conjecture, from the expression of his countenance, what rocks there may be ahead. For my part, I can form no conjecture about it, and such a state of suspense is to me insupportable.

B. Are you quite sure of that? I can't help thinking this state of suspense does not oppress you quite so much as you say it does. *Au fond de votre âme* you are, I suspect, divided between the fear of some mischief and the hope of some novelty, which leaves an exciting scope to imagination. You are afraid of accidents, but you are fond of surprises; and a régime which should exclude surprises would fail to satisfy you, because it would leave the door open to *ennui*. You tremble a little every morning when you open the 'Moniteur,' but that very tremor has something in it that is not displeasing to your levity and curiosity of temper; and if you are deprived too long of this sort of excitement, the world seems to you to stand still.

*La France s'ennuie!*—formidable word—first uttered by Lamartine, if we recollect right, in 1847—the eve of the deluge.

'The most politically-stirring element of the French people,' says Prevost-Paradol, 'though not the most enlightened—that part which makes revolutions in a *tour de main*, while society stands by and lets it make them—has two ruling passions: the first is the passion of predominance, or the show of predominance, over Europe; the second is the passion of establishing a paradise upon earth, beginning with the social regeneration of the French people, and proceeding to reform the rest of the world on that regenerate model. These two passions could not but find a perennial source of irritation in the moderate policy and modest language of the Government of Louis Philippe.'

And to these two passions was addressed that part of the policy of Napoleon III. the most open to censure on general grounds of principle and public policy.

Justice will not be done to Napoleon's III.'s singular career and character, unless it be recognised that he really had an ideal policy in view, which he sought to realise, and which he had already set forth with sufficient explicitness in his '*Idées Napoléoniennes*.' M. Guizot has observed somewhere in his '*Memoirs*' that men *belong to their opinions*, and act as they think, more than they are themselves aware of. Louis Napoleon's rooted conviction of the unworkableness of parliamentary government, under the conditions of that system in France, had been plainly enough expressed by him, long before events put it in his power to muzzle parliamentarism for nearly a score of years in that country. He contrasted France with England acutely and accurately at the period when he wrote, as regarded the social circumstances which submitted individual ambition in the latter country to party discipline, and rendered parliamentary government practicable, by placing political leadership, for the most part, in the hands of men independent of official position for personal or class importance, and not ready at any moment, as in France, to hazard a revolution merely to overthrow a Ministry. At the risk of scandalising 'earnest and decided reformers,' we must confess that our own opinion of the insufficiency of a popular parliamentary system—pure and simple—to secure political stability in a country 'unboned by revolutions,' like France, agrees very closely with the



doctrine of Louis Napoleon's earlier writings. Parliamentary government, as put in operation in France, had undergone a succession of break-downs. It is an easy resource, in the interest of popular politics, to ascribe those successive break-downs solely to the anti-popular, anti-revolutionary attitude of monarchs or ministers. No dispassionate reader of French political history will fall into that facile mode of explaining the failure of France to preserve and develop the essential elements of constitutional government. No writer was less disposed to fall into it than Prevost-Paradol. We may add, none less disposed to make any individual personage mainly or primarily responsible for the profound political apathy into which France had been thrown by the recurrence of revolutions without result—save that of preparing fresh revolutions.

Napoleon III.'s theory, of government has had the singular advantage—so far as it is an advantage to it to be thoroughly known and strictly judged—of having first been expounded very fully by himself in his earlier published writings; of having, secondly, been applied on the most important theatre of European politics; and thirdly, of having been watched and criticised in succession by two of the acutest intellects of the age—the late Alexis de Tocqueville and the late Prevost-Paradol. Tocqueville was Louis Napoleon's Foreign Minister during part of his presidency—that part, by the way, which included the siege of Rome and re-establishment of the Papal government in 1849.<sup>1</sup> Prevost-Paradol was the most vivacious, the most pertinacious, and

<sup>1</sup> 'I am not bound,' said Tocqueville in a conversation with the late Mr. Nassau Senior at Sorrento, in February 1851, 'to defend the Roman expedition. It was no act of mine. When I entered the Cabinet we were already at Civita Vecchia. All that I could do was to impress on Oudinot the necessity of so conducting the siege as to avoid injuring what is the property of the whole Christian world—the monuments of Rome. In this attempt we succeeded.'

Mrs. Simpson, daughter of the late Mr. Senior, has favoured the world, of late years, with successive and very welcome publications, consisting of copious extracts from her father's regularly kept diaries in France and Italy, and carefully recorded and authenticated conversations with the most eminent amongst foreign statesmen, during the fifteen years succeeding the Paris Revolution of 1848.

most formidable critic of the Imperial policy in the press from 1858 to 1866. His leading articles in the '*Journal des Débats*,' and his fortnightly letters to the '*Courrier du Dimanche*' (which latter at length provoked the final suppression of that journal in 1866), have been collected and republished in seven volumes, under the titles of '*Essais de Politique et de Littérature*,' and '*Quelques Pages d'Histoire Contemporaine*.' In his last publication in 1868, entitled '*La France Nouvelle*,' he reproduced, in a more condensed shape and with somewhat softened asperity, his general views on the state and prospects of France, which, in the light of after events, read scarcely short of prophetic. Prevost-Paradol's relations with the Emperor ended, as Tocqueville's had commenced, with being official. Considering all he had written of Napoleon III.'s external and internal policy—writings which, together with Tocqueville's posthumously-published Letters and Conversations, characterise that policy in traits which must remain indelible—the greater marvel is that Prevost-Paradol should have had an important embassy offered him by the late Imperial Government, than that he should have accepted it. But there had been little that could be called pointedly personal, nothing declaredly or irreconcilably anti-dynastic, in Prevost-Paradol's eight or ten years' warfare of the pen with the Government. His opposition to it had been founded on the principles of parliamentary government, impugned in the '*Idées Napoléoniennes*,' repudiated in the first Imperial Constitution of 1852, re-established partially and tentatively by the decree of November 1860, and, as it appeared, frankly and fully returned to in the programme of the late Ollivier Ministry.

In the most instructive chapter of M. Prevost-Paradol's '*France Nouvelle*,' which bears the title of '*Nos Échecs depuis 1789*,' the successful candidature of Prince Louis Bonaparte for the presidency in 1848 was justly designated as tantamount to 'a declaration of war, if not a sentence of death on the Republic.' Now a declaration of war against the Republic was precisely what the anti-Republican majority

of the National Assembly of that Republic was well pleased to put forth. The Napoleonic idolatry, which was still prevalent amongst the peasantry, and which amongst the simpler of them was said to have amounted to actual belief that the Little Corporal had resurged in *proprid personâ*—little cocked hat, grey *redingote*, and all—was aided and abetted in favour of the then Prince-President's candidature by the political passions of the several Royalist and Conservative sections of the Assembly; passions mingled of alarm and anger, excited by the sudden overthrow of a dynasty and the not less sudden explosion of Socialistic doctrines—an explosion, of course, laid to the charge of the Republic, but certainly most unjustly visited on the honest straightforward chief of that Republic, the late General Cavaignac. The very fact that the Conservatives of different colours had a decided majority in the Assembly might have seemed a sufficient security for the moment against *la République démocratique et sociale*, to render it unnecessary to rush headlong into Imperialism, which, after all, has not been without its own Socialistic proclivities. No one of political foresight could have regarded the presidency of Prince Louis Napoleon in any other light than that of a prelude to a second Napoleonic Empire. The support then given by the Conservative leaders of the National Assembly and their followers to a candidate for Chief Magistrateship, who could only be rationally regarded as a pretender to Empire, was, according to M. Prevost-Paradol, the fruit of the still smouldering resentment of the surprise of February—of the old personal animosities between the ex-monarchical and Republican leaders—of the indignation, mixed with fear, excited by the menaces of the insurgent Socialists—and lastly, perhaps of the covertly-cherished hope of restoring constitutional monarchy at the end of the term of office of a President who was then believed more capable of upsetting a Republic than of erecting an Empire.

It was soon perceived that the man who held in his hands the reins of the whole system of the completely centralised civil and military administration of France, was not

one to be led by mere deference to the text of the Constitution to lay them down again at the end of his four years' term of office. Seeing this, the parliamentary majority took perhaps the wisest course open to them, by attempting to modify the new Republican Constitution so as to prolong the presidential term of power, and stave off, as long as might be, the struggle of rival ambitions and mortally opposed opinions then foreseen as imminent. But here interposed the text of the Constitution, which prohibited any change in its provisions by a majority of less than three-fourths of the National Legislature. A Republican minority of more than one-fourth refused, as might have been expected, to give what the Prince-President had the power and will to take, and took accordingly :—

'The ruins, then, of the second Republic,' says M. Prevost-Paradol, 'were heaped over so many former ruins, which had been piling up since the close of the last century. It is the monotonous spectacle of all these successive catastrophes that has struck into the soul of our nation, once so ardent, that mortal discouragement and profound lassitude, which seem to have now become the very temperament of France. After so many experiments that have failed—after so many hopes deceived—there has been formed among us a sort of public temper which may best be described by saying that it is as exactly as possible opposite to the spirit of 1789. In the same degree as France, at that epoch, was disposed to generous illusions, in the same degree she is now disposed to distrust the most modest improvements. She seems incapable henceforth of hatred as of love, dead to all political passions, and disabused especially of all political hope. She regards her governments, and all their efforts to cure or please her, much like those desponding patients who listen to all their doctors with tranquil indifference, and receive them all with the same melancholy smile. Foreigners mark with astonishment the slow and feeble pulsations of the great heart of France, whose beating heretofore made itself felt to the ends of the earth. Was it not our own history which the greatest of Roman poets figured in that of Sisyphus ?—

Et semper victus tristisque recedit ;

Nam petere imperium, quod inane est, nec datur unquam,

Atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,

Hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte

Saxum, quod tamen a summo jam vertice sursum

Volvitur, et plani raptim petit æquora campi.

‘How many true patriots has this fatal rock, in vain rolled upwards, crushed in its descent! How many times has the French people believed itself at length to hold in its grasp order combined with liberty and equality—only to fall back with empty hands! *Et semper victus tristisque recedit.*’

‘What makes me fear,’ remarks the late Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in 1858 to his early friend Gustave de Beaumont,

‘that nothing for a long time to come can make us free, is that we have no serious desire to be so. Not that I am of the number of those who say we are a decrepit and corrupt nation, predestined for all future time to servitude. Those who in that view parade before our eyes the vices of the old Roman Empire, and please themselves with the notion that we reproduce those vices on a reduced scale, seem to me to live in books, and not in the realities of their time.

‘No, we are not a decrepit nation, but a fatigued nation, a nation in dread of anarchy. We are indeed deficient in large and lofty conceptions of liberty, but we are nevertheless worth something better than our present destiny. We are not yet ripe to submit ourselves to a definitively and regularly established despotism; and our present rulers will find this out, if their system should ever acquire sufficient stability to discourage conspiracy, compel anarchical parties to lay down their arms, and suppress them so effectually that they seem to vanish from the political stage. In the midst of their triumph our rulers will with surprise discover a whole nation of unknown and unsuspected opponents under the dense stratum of complacent servitude which covers the soil of France. I sometimes think that the sole chance of witnessing the revival in France of a strong taste for liberty may be the temporarily tranquil and apparently final establishment of despotism. Look at the course all our successive revolutions have run. The experience of France for the last seventy years has proved that the people, though a necessary element of revolution, cannot by itself make one. While isolated it is impotent, and only becomes irresistible when a part of the enlightened classes make up their minds to join it; and it is never till the moment when these classes are no longer afraid of it, that they can be brought to lend it either their moral or material co-operation. Thence it has happened that it was just at the moment when each of our Governments in succession, during more than sixty years, has seemed strongest, that it has been

struck by the disease by which it was doomed to perish. The Restoration began to die the very day when nobody any longer talked of killing it. It was the same thing with the Government of July, and I believe it will be the same with the present Government.'

From the Napoleonic position of the untrustworthiness of the Many, represented in Parliament, as a governing power, or a power controlling government, Louis Napoleon had made a tremendous leap to the trustworthiness of the One—and that one, himself. Prevost-Paradol very successfully shows the utter incompatibleness of personal responsibility in the permanent Chief of an imperial executive with the secure administration of the executive power itself, and the free discussion of its measures. A Chief Magistrate, whose functions are permanent and meant to be hereditary, cannot, without public inconvenience and danger, proclaim himself personally responsible for the acts of his Government, and reduce his Ministers, as Napoleon III. did, to mere mechanical instruments of his will. Personal responsibility implies personal dismissal or punishment for misconduct, and either is incongruous with a power permanent and meant to become hereditary. 'That which is permanent,' says the Ghost of Dr. Johnson, in the 'Rejected Addresses,' 'cannot be removed, or, if removed, ceases to be permanent.' For a sovereign to claim personal responsibility is to claim autocracy, since a power too high and too fixed to be called to account for its acts can be responsible only in name, and removable or punishable only by revolution.

The self-proclaimed responsible Ruler of France had the power of making war, or of making treaties independent of Parliamentary sanction<sup>1</sup>; and we have seen into what an abyss the exercise of such powers may plunge their holder.

'Thus understood and thus practised,' says M. Prevost-Paradol, 'the right of war is certainly a prerogative of singular grandeur; it resumes that solemn, mysterious, and terrible aspect it had in the world before the establishment of free and constitutional governments

<sup>1</sup> The *Senatus-consultum* of September 8, 1869, nominally restored the right of the Chambers to be consulted on questions of peace or war; but the manner of consulting them on the eve of the present war was a mere mockery.

—at the time when Nicole wrote with such depth and truth in the reign of Louis XIV.—“A declaration of war is a sentence of death pronounced by one prince against the subjects of another who has opposed his will.” But what the good and wise Nicole forgot to say is, that the execution of that sentence of death involves some danger to those charged with it by their sovereign, and implies, *par contre coup*, the infliction of a similar sentence on a good many of his own subjects . . . We have more and more accustomed ourselves to aim at that false greatness which consists in making perpetual encroachments on our neighbours, or keeping them continually on the *qui vive*, and enjoying their inquietude as a tribute of due deference to our assumed supremacy. We have become intoxicated with this barren and pernicious pleasure, and we never could forgive those of our sovereigns who neglected to purvey it for us.’

It has sometimes been made matter of reproach to England by Liberal Frenchmen that she showed herself so ready to take the proffered hand of a Prince who had strangled a Republic—the short-lived Republic imposed on France by the Paris revolutionists of February 1848. But if England had waited to renew her alliance with France till France was ruled by statesmen who had faithfully adhered to Republicanism, that alliance could not have been renewed at all. No one of the leaders of the majority of the National Assembly affected such adherence to the Republic—no one of them took the slightest pains to disguise aversion to it as an unforeseen and unwished political catastrophe—a triumph over national opinion, only won by surprise. No one of them would have hesitated to take any opportunity that offered of overthrowing a form of government which recalled reminiscences of mob-terrorism and dictatorship—a terrorism and dictatorship which the language held by some of the most prominent Republicans in 1848 showed that only the power was wanting, not the will, to renew. When Napoleon III. held out his hand to England and showed that preference for her alliance which he has also shown since at some critical epochs of English dominion as well as of French policy, it would have been a strange political puritanism on our part to reject as an ally a Prince whom France had accepted as a Sovereign.

And here we may cite the independent testimony of Prevost-Paradol to the truth that the extensive and deplorable disturbance of the peace of Europe which commenced four years back with the break-up of the old German Bund and the campaign of Sadowa, may fairly be considered as in no small degree traceable to an interruption of that alliance between England and France which, while it can be maintained, has ever been the best security for European repose and progress. England and France never can be united in sincere alliance except on some broad and general ground of European interest. And when they separate their policy, it is because some smaller interest, or supposed interest, or sentiment, or punctilio, intervenes to divide them. Such a division had unfortunately taken place in 1864, at the critical moment when the united intervention of England and France could alone have deterred Prussia and Austria from pushing to the last extremity the masterful injustice towards poor Denmark, for which one of those two rival Powers so soon took in hand the providential office of punishing the other. When, at the crisis of the fate of Denmark, England proposed to France to present a joint ultimatum to the German Powers, which might have preserved to Denmark so much of her territory as no colour of right could be pretended even by German diplomatists or professors for taking from her—France drew back with a parade of deference for German popular sentiment, the fruitlessness of which in conciliating any corresponding consideration for French popular sentiment France soon learned by experience. Prevost-Paradol wrote in 1868 with an earnestness which has proved prophetic—

‘ Yes, France will have to expiate, one way or other—with the blood of her children, if she succeeds; with the loss of her greatness, perhaps of her very existence, if she fails—the series of faults committed in her name by her Government since the day when the dismemberment of Denmark was commenced under her eyes—since the day when France favoured that great disorder in the vain hope of profiting by it.’



The French refusal of joint action in the case of Denmark with England placed the latter power, as Prevost-Paradol justly remarks, in a similar mortifying position of inability to follow up the 'prave 'ords' of Lords Russell and Palmerston by corresponding action, to that in which France had found herself placed the year before by the English refusal of joint action in the case of Poland. If any feeling of rancour on that score, or on that of the previous non-concurrence of the English Government in the Imperial proposals for an European Congress, provoked the French Government to leave England isolated at the Danish crisis, that Government had good cause to rue the indulgence of any such feeling, when it found itself isolated in turn two years afterwards, in presence of the events which effaced Austria as a German power, and confronted France with the North German Confederation, and the northern and southern German military alliance.

In the Preface to his fourth and last volume of '*Lettres Politiques*,' Prevost-Paradol traced with an unsparing hand the genesis of the German question from the Danish.

'Now at length,' he exclaimed (1867), 'we find ourselves confronted by that German question which at this day effaces all others, and to which the national instinct assigns the first place in public solicitude. It called itself the Danish before it called itself the German question, and history will place on record the opening of that Danish question as the precise point of time at which France had it in her power to take her choice between two opposite lines of policy, not less freely, and with not less decisive consequences, than Hercules in the famous legend had to take his choice between vice and virtue.

'At the Conferences of London everything invited the French Government to assume a firm and unequivocal attitude in favour of Denmark. The sympathy of France for an old and faithful ally; the goodwill of England, who from the first to the last day of those conferences pressed us to oppose a resolute "No"—pronounced in common with her, and to be supported if necessary by joint action—to the further progress of the iniquitous enterprise of the German Powers; lastly, the paramount and evident interest of France to prevent the aggrandisement of Prussia from aggravating the effects of the treaties of 1815 in that part of them the most full of menace to French greatness.

'There was the path of virtue—a path easy if ever was path to follow—and had it been followed, no effusion of blood would have, in all probability, been necessary once more to demonstrate that the sincere and complete union of France and England suffices at critical epochs to preserve order and vindicate respect for law in Europe.

'The French Government had adopted a different policy—the precious policy of proportional and simultaneous aggrandisement of France and Prussia. The deliberate surrender of Denmark to German cupidity ; the unfortunate appearance of a secret understanding with Prussia in Italy to force Austria by every possible means to war ; finally, the precarious and degrading dependence on the loyalty and moderation of Prussia, and the eventual necessity of entering the lists ourselves, either to support Prussia and Italy if imperilled by Austria, or to snatch from Prussia, victorious and probably faithless, the compensation indispensable to French greatness ; or, in the last resort, at our own risk and peril, to seek that compensation for ourselves at the cost of inoffensive Belgium ;—such were the inevitable alternative consequences of a tortuous policy, from which foresight of those consequences should have deterred the French Government.'

Let it be remembered that this keen prospect of the future was taken in 1867, while the Krupp cannon were yawning, innocent of shot or shell, on the festal Champ de Mars, while the Benedetti rough drafts of treaty were sleeping snugly in the pigeon-holes of the Berlin Foreign Office, and the disastrous war of 1870 was in the womb of Time.

The best apology for what must be called French recreancy on the Danish question was the absorption of French forces in Mexico at that most momentous crisis for Europe. Mexico may, in fact, be considered to have commenced the ruin of the Second Empire, as Spain did of the First. Less of a crime—though avoidable national bloodshedding must be a crime at all times—the Mexican expedition of Napoleon III. was a similar blunder, on a more distant stage and on a smaller scale, to the unprovoked Spanish invasion of Napoleon I. : the blunder of attempting by mere military force, necessarily transient in its operation, to subjugate alien and uncongenial races on their own soil. *Le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle*, whether in Spain or Mexico ;

and in both cases *la chandelle* was in urgent requisition for nearer use.

On the day, said Prevost-Paradol, when the separation of policy between France and England gave the German Powers free scope for the iniquitous spoliation of Denmark—

‘On that day Prussia and France, were, so to speak, set in motion against each other, like two trains on a railway, which, starting simultaneously from opposite and distant points, meet each other at length upon the same line. After a long circuit—shorter, however, than might be supposed—the two trains suddenly come in sight of each other. Alas! they are not only each charged with the wealth of nations, but many a heart beats in each animated by no national enmity, and sensible only of the sweetness of life which they are about to lose. How many tears will the blood cost which is thus predestined to flow! None wish this terrible shock to take place—all exert themselves to prevent it. Steam is shut off, breaks are put on. All in vain: the impulse has been given too far back, the momentum acquired is too great for resistance. It is inevitable that the sacrifice to human folly should be consummated—to human folly unhappily armed with absolute power.’

If Prevost-Paradol illustrates by his retrospect of the past the mispolicy which led to war, he illustrates it, we must add, not less vividly by showing his own share in it, which made him, like M. Thiers, an accessory before the act to the onslaught of France on Germany, at length determined on in the Imperial councils.

‘They talk to us,’ he said, in a letter to the ‘*Courrier du Dimanche*’ in 1866, ‘of *compensation* for the approaching completion of German unity. Sir, I know of no compensation but one, which can be worthy of the head of a Government of France, whatever may be his name, or origin, or title—whether he calls himself King, President, or Emperor—and that is to die fighting sword in hand to prevent it.’

It would be unjust to the unfortunate Ruler of France, whose declaration of war against Prussia rekindled into so fierce a blaze from their embers of 1813–14 all those national animosities which still smouldered in the German heart<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> ‘I found in Rhenish Germany,’ said Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in 1854 to a young relative, Baron Hubert de Tocqueville, ‘the same feelings

to forget that politicians claiming the title of Moderate on all other questions, and exercising such influence as that of Thiers in the legislative body and Prevost-Paradol in the press, had been declaring war, as far as words went, these four years on the whole German nation, if it should dare to complete its union under Prussian leadership or in Prussian alliance. It was *casus belli* enough that an united German nation should presume to form itself beside an united French nation; and it could only be a question of time, prudence, and preparation, *when* the Rhine should be crossed to crush such insolent pretensions with the armed force of France. The writer before us, indeed, shows the shrinking of humanity from the horrors of the coming conflict, and the presentiment of genius of the doubtful prospect of success. But in his view the mere fact that Germany pretended to national unity would justify France in drawing the sword to keep her, perforce, divided. And the very doubt of victory exasperated the feverish impatience which expected the combat. Prevost-Paradol wrote, two years back, in his 'France Nouvelle':—

Proceeding on the hypothesis of a war with Prussia—*shall we vanquish Prussia?* The mere fact that such a question can be asked, shows too clearly the change which has been accomplished within these two years in the relative position of France and Germany.'

Prevost-Paradol stated, at that time with truth—

which you find prevalent at Vienna with regard to the French—feelings often of alarm, almost always of hatred. How should it be otherwise? We turned the world upside down, disturbed the peace of all nations, and stirred society to its very foundations—all in the name of ideas, sentiments, and doctrines we have ourselves miserably surrendered since. How can we wonder at the opinion now entertained of us in Europe? And again in 1858—'All you tell me of Germany agrees with what I thought and with what I knew of it. I returned from Germany three years ago, convinced that our neighbours across the Rhine are our irreconcilable enemies, and that, whatever might be the desire of their Governments to ally themselves with us, the people would always draw off their chiefs to other alliances. It was the long, exhausting, and, above all, insolent oppression exercised by the First Empire over Germany that united it as one man against us, and lighted up passions which still survive, and will long survive, the causes which gave birth to them in the hearts of the entire German populations.'—*Correspondance Inédite*, pp. 325-481.

It is not that the Prussian Government has any desire to provoke, or the French Government to make war. Quite the contrary; it is notorious at the present time that, from different reasons, the chiefs of those two states are sincerely disposed for peace. But, in spite of the will of men, the force of things leads directly to war. The reason is very simple; it is all but impossible that Prussia, notwithstanding her prudence, should not make some further step towards the absorption of Germany. And it is impossible that the French Government, notwithstanding its patience, should stand by and see that step made without drawing the sword.'

Even on the hypothesis of French victory over Prussia, Prevost-Paradol admitted the probability that 'the movement towards German unity, stimulated even by defeat, would soon resume its course, and the result would be retarded, rather than finally averted, by a successful effort of the valiant arm of France.' Then to what purpose any such effort to arrest forcibly the operation of those general causes which, in his own opinion, whatever might be the immediate issue of an armed struggle, would continue to operate for the ultimate achievement of German unity?

The vehement repugnance with which Frenchmen of all parties since 1866 have regarded German progress towards that achievement, doubtless was quite sincere. But to entitle that repugnance to express itself sword in hand, Frenchmen should have abstained from aspirations, the continually recurring avowal of which convinced Germans of all parties of the necessity of closing their ranks and completing their union. France should have shown herself a safe neighbour to the German Confederation of 1815, to have entitled her to quarrel with the German Confederation of 1866 for the mere fact of its existence. The Prussian semi-official 'Provincial Correspondence,' in a recent remarkable manifesto, has truly told the French people and Government that what they have in this war asserted the right to resist sword in hand in Germany is precisely the same process of consolidation under one head of the *disjecta membra* of dominion which was completed ages ago in France, and to which France owes all her national greatness. And for France, of

all nations, to pretend to arrest that process on the ground of the treaties of 1815, might be endurable, if all her efforts since 1848, and even since 1830, had not been directed to throw contempt on those treaties, and nullify their provisions at every possible opportunity. From the date of the severance of Belgium from Holland to that of the 'revindication' of Savoy and Nice, all French parties have been ready to abet all infringements on the treaties of 1815 which favoured French interests. The French fixed idea of reclaiming the Rhine frontier, which the wars of the Revolution had put in their possession for the first time, was cherished as regardlessly of the treaties of 1815 as the German fixed idea of national unity which she is now realising. So wise a man as Tocqueville talked fifteen years ago, in his Correspondence, of 'the great chimera of German unity' as taking a much firmer hold on the German imagination than the desire for real liberty in each of the countries of which Germany is composed. The two fixed ideas of the two nations have come at last, as they could not but come at last, in collision, and the French idea of re-conquest may be likened to brilliant and brittle Sèvres china dashing itself, like the jar in the fable, against Berlin iron.

It is a question which from time to time the course of events forces on attention—How is it that all the wisdom of France proves unequal to control her unwisdom? At the recent crisis of her fate, as at all former crises, there has been enough in France of what Guizot somewhere calls the *vigueur rationnelle* of political disquisition to set up all Europe in wise saws and modern instances. There is enough, for instance, in Prevost-Paradol's 'France Nouvelle' thoroughly to lay bare the main cause of what he calls '*nos échecs depuis 1789*,' which may be briefly indicated as the '*perfervidum Gallorum ingenium*,' ever overshooting the mark of the practically attainable, and ever too impatient of any powers confronting its will—however legitimately existing—to come to any terms of compromise with them. Intolerance, to the pitch of internecine conflict, of whatever thwarts it at home or abroad, is the constantly-recurring character of

public action in France. Upon that rock have split, for the last eighty years, all her best hopes of national and international peace and progress.

Prevost-Paradol's political imagination was too nimble for the slow march of facts, like that of many highly-endowed Frenchmen; and when such an imagination, bodying forth the forms of things unknown and events unborn, translates itself into action, it is very apt to precipitate the worst evils it prematurely anticipates. '*Le Français est une machine nerveuse*,' said the First Napoleon, with his keen unsympathising insight into the weak points of the national character. The Frenchman takes umbrage, or takes fright, like a high-mettled charger, at whatever unexpectedly crosses his path or affronts his *amour propre*. 'For a nation which has known greatness and glory,' says M. Prevost-Paradol, 'there is no alternative between maintaining its old prestige or sinking into complete impotence.' Let this be granted—it may still be affirmed that the old prestige of nations is the last thing they lose, if they forbear from exposing it to over-rude tests. The old prestige of the Spain of Charles V. survived a succession of Philips. The old prestige of the Venetian power and polity long outlived its real vigour. The old prestige of France assuredly would have been in no immediate peril from the pacific and therefore protracted process of German unification, which French impatience has precipitated by the red-heat of warfare fusing the Fatherland instantaneously into one. Prevost-Paradol's passionate demand—'What can become of France, with a new military power of fifty-one millions of men at her doors?' is best answered by another question—What wisdom was there on the part of France in calling, by her armed attack, that new power, which might long have remained dormant, into sudden self-consciousness, and compelling it to energetic action? What was to become of France with an united Germany at her doors depended mainly on what degree of genial heat France herself retained—of what internal and external development France remained capable. If her internal power of growth and expansion was decaying—and

her all but stationary population at home, and failure to colonise even so near a dependence as Algeria, must be admitted to be shrewd symptoms of national senescence and torpor—the causes of decline could only be aggravated by more arming and more fighting. Foremost amongst those causes, in Prevost-Paradol's opinion—in which opinion he stood by no means single amongst serious French writers—is the slow rate of progress of French population of late times compared with that of her more progressive continental or insular rivals. 'We must consider as absolutely chimerical,' he says, 'every project and hope of preserving for France her relative rank in the world, if those hopes and projects do not take this maxim as their *point de départ*—that the number of Frenchmen must be made to increase with sufficient rapidity to maintain a certain equilibrium of our numerical force with that of the other great nations of the world.' Assuredly the wars of the Second Empire, like those of the First, have run directly counter to 'every project and hope of preserving for France her relative rank in the world' by preserving unexhausted her flower of manhood and function of *officina gentium*. To that function England and Germany have succeeded—the former in the direct work of planting new colonies, the latter in furnishing immense contingents to the invading forces best befitting these ages, which seek new hemispheres, not to contend with rivals, but to conquer the wilderness.

'Forty millions of French,' said Prevost-Paradol, 'concentrated on our own territory, are by no means sufficient to form a counterpoise to fifty-one millions of Germans, whom Prussia *may perhaps be able* to unite on our frontier, and the increased population which Russia *may be able to boast of* at no distant period.'

'But how insignificant becomes this French figure of forty millions if we take the census of all the populations of English tongue who will cover the globe, when the United States of America—when the Anglo-Saxon States of Oceania—shall have reached full development! How shall we assure ourselves of a *proportionate increase of population*, indispensable, if it is hoped that the French name is still to count for something in the world?'

This question also may be replied to by another—How



could the youth of France be driven by hundreds of thousands into the life of camps, yet retained for the life of cottages and the functions of fathers of families? How could the wealth of France be lavished by thousands of millions on military adventures, yet husbanded for home-culture or for peaceful colonization?

Prevost-Paradol conceived a corresponding increase of territory to be not less indispensable than the desired increase of population to preserve the relative importance of France in the scale of nations. He perceived, however, with the good sense which struggled with his uneasy patriotism, that France can no longer hope to found colonies at a distance from her central seat of empire. In the first place, the *Δόσ που στώ* is a demand now difficult to answer: the earth's surface is for the most part pre-occupied: in the next place, Frenchmen in the present age seem to have lost the spirit of distant colonial adventure. Prevost-Paradol therefore turned his views to Algeria, which, though it has been a French territorial possession these forty years, seems little nearer becoming a French colony than at the date of conquest. 'A hundred and twelve thousand Europeans, imperfectly guarded by seventy-six thousand soldiers, in the midst of two millions and a half of Arabs ever ready to take advantage of the slightest negligence to rise in revolt against us—*voilà l'Algérie.*' Pointing to the rapid progress of the young colony of Queensland, Prevost-Paradol asked sorrowfully what would it have been in the hands of France?

'What Englishman would ever have been tempted to emigrate thither? What else would have been seen there but a camp, a café, a theatre, a prison? May the day soon come,' he exclaimed, 'when our countrymen, finding themselves *cramped for room* in French Africa (Frenchmen have hitherto formed an inconsiderable portion of its scanty European population), will overflow over *Morocco and Tunis*, and at length lay the foundation of that Mediterranean empire which will not only supply a satisfaction for our national pride, but which, in the future state of the world, will certainly become the last refuge of our national greatness.'

After all, has not every nation its bee in its bonnet?—and may it not modestly be asked, whether the British buzzer

has not perhaps buzzed as idly in its time as any of its neighbours? Amongst the titles of the chapters remaining unwritten of Arbuthnot's 'History of John Bull,' we find the following—Chap. iv.: 'Of the methods by which John endeavoured to preserve peace among his neighbours; how he kept a pair of steelyards to weigh them, and by diet, purging, vomiting, and bleeding, tried to bring them to equal bulk and strength.' Of the schemes to preserve the European balance of power which busied John Bull three centuries, it may be observed that his apprehensions and his armaments were almost always directed against objects of traditional jealousy and enmity which had become antiquated, and long after the real sources of danger should have been sought (if such must needs be sought) elsewhere. Thus James I. lost credit for seeking to be friends with Spain, after Spain was no longer dangerous as an enemy; and Cromwell gained credit for the 'spirited' foreign policy which sent a British auxiliary force to Dunkirk to help France to substitute a really formidable rising power for the safer neighbourhood of a sinking power in the Spanish Low Countries. In John Bull's slowly transferred apprehension, the French next succeeded the Spaniards in the traditional character of 'natural enemies,' which they have only of late lost. By a whimsical contradiction, while at the present time the old bugbear of Antwerp (supposing it in the possession of France) being a pistol presented, as the first Napoleon vaunted, at the breast of England, has been revived in Parliament, and out of it, on the provocation of recent disclosures, a month or two back John Bull was begging the French Government to let him lay out millions in constructing a French port for steamers of the largest size directly opposite Dover—furnishing funds, in other words, for presenting the pistol to his own breast formidably nearer than the Scheldt.

When Goethe accompanied the memorable Prussian campaign of the Argonne in 1792—a campaign commenced, in M. Ollivier's phrase, *à cœur léger*, and soon retreated from with heavy hearts over heavy roads—he describes the sudden awakening of the German excursionists into France from

their dream of conquest, so similar to that of the French excursionists into Germany seventy-eight years afterwards. 'Everyone now,' said Goethe—on the first rumour of intended retreat—'saw the situation; none looked each other in the face; or, if they did, it was to curse their luck or their leaders. Towards night we formed a circle in which few seemed disposed to break silence, but at length there was a general appeal to me to know what I thought of it all. I replied, "From this spot and from this day begins a new epoch of world-history, and you will be able to say that you were here to see it."'

This time it is France, not Germany, that has rushed into 'war for an idea,' and the idea she warred for was to arrest by force of arms German national union, which her declaration of war at once converted into an accomplished fact. The baffled French belligerents of this year—*carent quia vate sacro*—are scarce likely perhaps to hear the sentence which the great German poet prophetically uttered to his comrades in the Prussian campaign of the Argonne in 1792, applied with equal frankness by French lips to the French campaign of the Rhine in 1870—'From this day begins for France and Germany a new epoch, and you may say you have lived to see it.'

If we could imagine ourselves unconcerned spectators of these European vicissitudes, there might be reserved for us a rude awakening at no distant period. When Louis XI., in 'Quentin Durward,' asks his astrologer if he can predict his own death, he replies that it will happen 'twenty-four hours before that of your majesty.' The present collapse of a military power, which has marched abreast with our own through so many eventful ages of European history, must have something of consequence to teach us. And that something we cannot think to be exactly what Mr. Lowe says it is, in his recent speech at Elgin: 'What we have been witnessing' is not precisely 'the destruction of a most gallant standing army by what is not a standing army.' What 'we think we hear'—if we hear rightly—is not 'the knell of

standing armies.' There is something almost like what our French neighbours call an *amère dérision*, in terming the Prussian military organisation, as remodelled since 1860, 'an organisation mainly useful for defensive wars.' It was remodelled expressly for such purposes as it served in 1866 in the war against Austria; and that war was neither defensive, nor, in its outset, otherwise than most unpopular. The ineffectiveness of the calls made upon the Landwehr in 1830, 1848, and subsequent years, when Prussia was really playing a defensive part in German and European politics, had sufficiently shown that, unless at exceptional epochs of enthusiasm, such as 1813, Mr. Lowe's 'armed nation' was, even for defensive purposes, a frail reed to trust to.

It was in direct defiance of popular predispositions, and repeated parliamentary majorities, that King William and Count Bismarck carried through that reorganisation of the Prussian military system by which it has been, during the last ten years, without losing its Landwehr reserve, approximated, as regards the regular forces kept on foot, to the great standing armies of neighbouring rival Powers. 'The Prussian Government,' says a well-informed French military writer, just before the sudden outbreking of the present war,<sup>1</sup> 'from the beginning opposed to the discontent of the doctrinaires of the Liberal party that placid indifference which so long enabled it to sustain a chronic constitutional conflict with the Chambers. All endowed with political foresight anticipated with confidence that, on the day when success should ratify the policy pursued by the Crown, the *démocrates unitaires* [ultra-Liberal partisans of German unity] would be the first to applaud a policy from which they had withheld their sanction, and would thus themselves, almost without knowing it, be brought under discipline by the prevailing military spirit.'

The governing power of Prussia is that ascribed to her by Mr. Carlyle—*drill*—including under that name whatever comes within the description of systematic scientific civil and military administration. Her military organisation has

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée Prussienne en 1870*, p. 20.

always had a strong royal and aristocratic backbone; it is this that is represented by King William and Count Bismarck at the present day; but the unpopular stiffness of the system has not prevented its superiority in science and action over the less rigid military hierarchies of Austria and France. The English army, scanty as it has always been in numbers compared with the work it has to do, has hitherto preserved those solid qualities in its regimental system—those habits of respected command and steady obedience, which the French army was losing, by the testimony of General Trochu, three years back,<sup>1</sup> even before the rude tests of this war.

If we want such lessons as Prussia got in bygone years, and as France is now getting, to teach us how to make effective military use of the men and material we have, we are not unlikely to get them in our turn—perhaps at no distant day; but national greatness and independence do not always survive such lessons.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Armée Française en 1867*, p. 29.

## KIV.

*BISMARCK, PRUSSIA, AND PAN-TEUTONISM.*<sup>1</sup>

1. *Das Buch vom Grafen Bismarck.* Von George Heseckiel. In drei Abtheilungen, reich illustriert von namhaften Künstlern. Bielefeld und Leipzig, 1869.
2. *Krieg und Friede. Zwei Briefe an Ernst Renan, nebst dessen Antwort auf den ersten.* Von David Friedrich Strauss. Leipzig, 1870.
3. *Unsere Grenzen.* Von Wolfgang Menzel. Stuttgart und Leipzig, 1868.
4. *Elsass und Lothringen. Nachweis, wie diese Provinzen dem Deutschen Reiche verloren gingen.* Von Adolf Schmidt, ord. Prof. an der Univ. Jena. Dritte vermehrte Auflage. Leipzig, 1870.
5. *Elsass und Lothringen, und ihre Wiedergewinnung für Deutschland.* Von Prof. Dr. Adolph Wagner. Fünfte Auflage. Leipzig, 1870.

At the soldierly banquet given by King William I. to his principal officers, on the brief rest-day which followed his ‘crowning mercy’ of September 2 last, at Sedan, champagne was served in honour of the great events of the day before—(*vin ordinaire* only, say the German chroniclers of the campaign, having previously appeared at the royal table)—and the King proposed a toast in the following terms:—

We must to-day, in gratitude, drink to the health of my brave army. *You*, War-Minister Von Roon, have sharpened our sword; *you*, General Von Moltke, have guided it; and *you*, Count Von Bismarck, by your direction of the national policy for years, have brought Prussia to her present pitch of elevation. Let us then drink to the health of the army—of the three I have named in connexion with that toast—and of every one present who has contributed, according to his power, to the results now accomplished.

The qualities which raised Freiherr Otto Von Bismarck—*Mad Bismarck*, as he was called in early manhood—from

<sup>1</sup> From the *Quarterly Review*, January 1871.

the obscure activities, and equally obscure diversions and dissipations of a land-improving, sporting, and deep-drinking Altmark Junker or Squire<sup>1</sup>—to hold the helm of state during the eight last eventful years in Prussia, may be regarded as in good measure identical with those which have won for Prussia herself, within half that period, ascendancy over Germany and victory over France. The final moral of the great international drama must be left to the future. The end is not yet, but the ends already compassed under Count Bismarck's Ministry, and compassed with the ultimate acquiescence and applause of his strongest popular opponents, suffice to show that the audacious and pugnacious Minister has well understood the instruments he had to use and the parties he had to deal with. Much of what has appeared the astounding audacity of his action in politics has really resulted from his 'abnormal-sapient' perception that windbags were windbags, and that a very slight prick might cause to collapse a very big bladder. The mistake apt to be made on this side the Channel about the political career of Bismarck is that of unconsciously crediting Prussia with the parliamentary precedents and traditions of England. But the most cherished Prussian traditions and precedents have always been those of military monarchy and aristocracy. These have been associated from first to last with all her modern advances in the scale of nations.

When Oliver Cromwell made his first appearance in the House of Commons, Lord Digby, according to the rather apocryphal parliamentary legend, asked Hampden, '*Who that sloven was?*' and received for answer—'That sloven whom you see before you hath no ornament in his speech:

<sup>1</sup> We learn from the *Book of Bismarck*, that when the Squire of Schoenhausen, having sown his wild oats, bethought himself at length of taking a wife, he found his character as a marrying man did not stand much higher with prudent parents than probably did that of Ritter Blaubart, after his too frequent conjugal bereavements. The pious and decorous parents of Fräulein Von Puttkammer were horrified at the announcement of such a suitor; but the Fräulein herself stood firm to her choice. It has never been said since that the lady of 'Mad Bismarck' has had to suffer anything similar or analogous to what a French critic of Perrault has called '*les angoisses trop méritées de Madame Barbebleu.*'

that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the King (which God forbid!), in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England.'

When Otto Von Bismarck made his first appearance as deputy from the Saxon Provincial Ritterschaft in the Prussian United Diet, convoked under the (soon repealed) provisions of the late well-meaning Frederick William IV.'s patent of February 1847, he presented the aspect of a man of powerful build of some three or four and thirty, thick head of hair short-cropped, ruddy and healthy countenance, bright eyes rather prominent—*à fleur de tête*, as the French say—and strong reddish beard. The new speaker stood bolt upright, looked his audience in the face for a moment, and then addressed them in a plain, unadorned, and occasionally hesitating manner, with a sharp and not exactly agreeable accent:—'I feel myself constrained to contradict what has so often been asserted, as well in this assembly as out of doors, whenever the popular claims for a constitution have come under discussion—viz. that the national movement of 1813 was made for that object, or from any other motive than to deliver our country from the disgrace of a foreign yoke.'

As might be anticipated, these few words of truth, delivered against an assumption as unfounded in historical fact as unnecessary to the practical objects of rational reformers, raised a storm of indignation in the impatient Liberal majority of that day against the unlucky Deputy of the Saxon Provincial Ritterschaft. Amidst the hubbub of articulate and inarticulate protests which saluted the new and unpractised speaker, if anyone had asked, after the fashion of Lord Digby, '*Who is that stammerer?*' would there have been a voice found to answer, as the story goes Hampden did for Cromwell, 'That stammerer, who hath no ornament in his speech—if it ever comes in the course of events (which God forbid!) to cement the future unity of Fatherland by "blood and iron"—that stammerer will be the foremost political personage in Prussia, in Germany, in Europe!'

Von Bismarck's first speech in the United Diet of 1847



struck the keynote of all his subsequent utterances in the Second Prussian Chamber, under the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary order of things which followed in rapid succession the Berlin *émeute* of March 1848, to which the weakness of Frederick William IV. gave for the time all the effects of a revolution. A military retreat before a metropolitan populace made the days of March memorable—a military rally in the face of the same populace reversed the situation by November. After the dissolution of the Chambers elected under the immediate effect of the events of March, and the issue of the *octroyée* constitution of December, Von Bismarck was elected as deputy for West Havelland to the new Second Chamber.

The offer of the German Imperial Crown to Prussia by the Frankfort Assembly which had substituted itself, by the grace of the people, for the old Diet of the Confederation in the Revolution year 1848, and the alternative propositions for German union which found a mouthpiece in Von Radowitz, were strenuously combated by Von Bismarck with all the determined outspokenness of his Prussian 'Junker-Politik.' But there were hints in his language that he, too, had *in petto* an alternative policy, which might possibly take a substantive shape at some future day, when arguments more cogent than parliamentary rhetoric should be available to support it:—

'I deny,' he said, 'that there exists anywhere among the Prussian people any felt need for national regeneration after the Frankfort pattern. Much has been said here about Frederick the Great; and his policy has even been identified with these projects for German union. I am rather disposed to believe that Frederick the Great would have addressed himself, in these circumstances, to the distinctive characteristic of Prussian nationality—to the warlike element which forms so marked a character of it—and would have addressed that character not without effect. He would have known that, in these days, as in those of our fathers, the trumpet-sound summoning Prussians under the banner of the Lord of their Land had not lost its charm for their ears, whether the cause contended for be the defence of our frontiers or the power and glory of Prussia. He would have felt that he had the choice either of allying himself with our

old comrade Austria, for the annihilation of the common enemy, Revolution, or of singly dictating to Germany what should be her future constitution, at the risk of having to throw his sword into the scale. Either of these courses might have furnished a national policy for Prussia. Either in union with Austria or acting singly for herself, such a policy would have placed Prussia in the right position for helping Germany to that power which belongs to her in Europe.'

Bismarck's evening solace, in his years of independent membership, after days engrossed with politics in the Chamber, was—beer and tobacco. His first Boswellian biographer, in 'The Book of Count Bismarck,' who chronicles small beer not less punctually (as becomes a good German) than greater matters, tells us that towards evening Bismarck was wont to resort to Schwartz's beer-house, at the corner of the Friedrich's and Leipziger Strassen, in Berlin—a house which was then the chief rendezvous of the Conservative party. At that establishment the 'little dog and all' was Conservative, and never failed to bark at any Democratic intruder. One evening, however, either 'Spitz' was off duty or Bismarck had strayed into a less Conservative beer-house. He had no sooner taken his seat than somebody at a neighbouring table permitted himself to say something very disparaging about some member of the royal family. Bismarck thereupon reared himself up to his full height and thundered at the offender—'Out of the room with you! If you are not out before I have drunk this glass out, I will break it on your pate.' An angry tumult arose upon this apostrophe, such as was wont to arise upon Bismarck's daily *Derbheiten* in the Second Chamber. He went on, however, quietly drinking his beer, and, when he had finished it, was as good as his word in shying the beer-glass at the offender's head. Deep silence ensued, and Bismarck called to the waiter, as if nothing had happened, 'Kellner, what's to pay for the broken glass?' The *coup de verre* had succeeded, and the voice of the room was unanimous in a verdict of 'Served right.'

<sup>1</sup> Another, and it must be assumed authentic, version of the incident above related is given in Dr. Busch's *Graf Bismarck und seine Leute* during the

‘*Les hommes se prennent par la douceur,*’ says the French proverb. Such as above narrated—and it is not a solitary trait—were the *douceurs* by which Bismarck disarmed opponents ‘in his hot youth,’ if that description is applicable to a man between thirty and forty. Such traits almost justify Mr. Grant Duff’s remark, that ‘the ground-tone of Bismarck’s character is *ὕβρις*.’<sup>1</sup> A story less violent, but not less characteristic, is told of him on arriving at Frankfort in 1851, to exercise his first political function under his present imperial and royal master, namely, that of Prussian representative at the Diet of the since dissolved German Confederation. In that capacity Bismarck visited the Austrian President of the Diet, Count Thun. The Count, a ‘*vornehmer Cavalier*,’ with a sufficient sense of his own superior rank, received the representative of Prussia with scant ceremony, went on smoking his cigar standing, and did not ask his visitor to sit down. The new envoy showed himself—as at all times—equal to the occasion, drew out his cigar-case, and said with unruffled ease, ‘May I ask your Excellency for a light?’ His Excellency was considerably taken aback—*im höchsten Grade verblüfft*—but gave Bismarck his light. The latter smoked his cigar, took his seat without ceremony, and opened the conversation.

campaign in France. ‘May I ask your Excellency,’ said his second Boswell in the course of conversation, ‘whether there is any truth in the story of the beer-glass which you broke on somebody’s head because he spoke ill of the Queen, or would not pledge her health with you?’ The great man replied that such an incident had indeed occurred, but there had been no political ingredient in it. A tipsy medical student had sought to fasten a quarrel on Ritter Bismarck, simply because the latter sat quietly drinking his beer, and would take no notice of his noise. He ended by coming up to Bismarck’s table, and threatening to throw his glass of beer in his face. Thereupon the Ritter hit him such a blow with his fist as sent him to the wall, broke his beer-glass, and loosened some of his teeth into the bargain. The hostess coming up, Bismarck told her he would pay for the damage—*i.e.* the damage to her property—and called the company to witness that he had acted solely on the defensive. Being ‘*ganz vernünftige Leute*,’ they took the Ritter’s part against their tipsy comrade. Meeting two of them afterwards at the Brandenburg Gate, they told him the noisy student’s teeth were all right again, and he was only apprehensive lest the affair should be talked of, and come to the ears of his authorities.

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in European Politics*, p. 235.

It may not be an uninteresting subject of consideration for Englishmen—why it was that, from the close of the Revolution year, 1848, Prussian politics took a course so different from that which our own constitutional history has led us to think the normal one. The organisation of the army, due to Frederick William I. and Frederick II., had begirt the throne with a military aristocracy founded on a landed basis, and which has not been taken off that basis by the modern reforms of the system. This has preserved that species of modern feudalism in the Prussian army which regards the obligation of loyalty to the Crown as paramount to that of allegiance to any paper or parliamentary constitution. And the course of events has cut out work for the army, the successful performance of which has finally justified, even in the eyes of Prussian popular politicians, the stubborn adherence of the King and his Minister Bismarck to their measures for increasing its strength, taken in direct defiance of decided parliamentary majorities from 1862 to 1866. Count Bismarck has been sometimes compared to Strafford; and his position, during the first four years of his ministry, towards the Prussian Second Chamber, was not very dissimilar to that of the chosen Minister of Charles I. The difference was, that the Prussian Strafford had for his master a steady single-minded soldier, and that he was able to achieve, as the first result of his policy, an ascendancy of Prussia in Germany, to the exclusion of Austria, at which every true Prussian had aspired as a consummation devoutly to be wished. Now the *ends* of Strafford had been as much abhorred as his *means* by the antagonists of Popery and prerogative, who carried all before them in the Long Parliament; and whereas, in England, Parliament was thus predestined to success in its struggle with the Crown, in Prussia the Crown was predestined to success in its struggle with Parliament, because in the latter case that struggle was finally seen by all parties to have had for its object what had long been the object of Prussian popular ambition—an ambition, it may be added, which was the natural off-  
of the very conditions of Prussian national existence.

'Prussia,' wrote a Hanoverian statesman about the beginning of the present century,<sup>1</sup> 'is not a country which possesses an army, but an army which possesses a country.' 'The Prussian Government,' says a French writer, M. Cherbuliez, 'sets its Chambers at defiance, because in Prussia there is nothing really solid in the shape of institutions but the administration and the army.' In a pamphlet recently published, ascribed to one of the leaders of the old Prussian Conservative party, Von Gerlach,<sup>2</sup> it is observed, 'The soul of Prussia is Prussian royalty, and that royalty is essentially military and feudal. The events of 1866 have proved that there was nothing really popular amongst us but the King and the army.'

In the interesting correspondence lately published between Strauss and Renan, in which each asserts the cause of his country with ardour so well tempered as to make us think they both originally mistook their vocation in devoting themselves to polemics instead of politics, Dr. Strauss, after confessing that, with his South German compatriots generally, he is by no means particularly fond of the Prussians, goes on, nevertheless, to ascribe to them political and military points of superiority which render Prussian leadership, unpopular as it is, still indispensable to Germany.

'One thing,' he says, 'must be conceded to the North German—to the Prussian especially—he is superior to the South German as a *political animal*. This superiority he owes partly to the nature of his country, which, poor in natural resources, compels to labour rather than allures to enjoyment, partly to his history—a history of hard schooling under princes of stern energy—but above all to the general obligation to military service.

'This obligation renders the State, and the duty owing to the State, ever present to the minds of every class of the population. Every son growing up, every year bringing round the regular season of military exercises, reminds every family in the most direct manner of the State, and not only of the duty owing to the State, but the honour of belonging to it. The war of 1866 had already given our South Germans much to think of; the present war, it is to be hoped, will complete the maturing of their judgments.

<sup>1</sup> Rehberg.

<sup>2</sup> *Deutschland am Neujahr*, 1870.

They must see that, if they have lent their arms to the struggle, the Prussians have found the head for it. They must feel that, with all their goodwill and good heart, with all their vigour and manhood, they could yet have achieved nothing against the French. An extended State system, exclusively put together of South German elements, might indeed form a full-fed and full-juiced but a puffy and unwieldy body. While, on the other hand, elements exclusively North German would go to the making of a firm and athletic but a spare and dry one. Prussia will contribute to our future German State her strong bones and stiff muscles, which South Germany will fill and round with her richer flesh and blood. And now imagine, if you can, that the one without detriment could dispense with the other—doubt, if you dare, that both are destined to develop in union to a full-grown State and nation !’

‘When two men ride on one horse,’ says the proverb, ‘one must ride behind.’ So long as Prussia remained content to ride behind Austria in the old German Confederation, as she had remained content to do throughout the whole period of the ascendancy of the policy of immobility of the late Prince Metternich, peace was preserved between the two great Powers of Germany.<sup>1</sup> So soon as Prussia resolved (or Von Bismarck resolved for her) *not* to ride behind, so soon war in

<sup>1</sup> Sir Alexander Malet, in his instructive volume on *The Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation in 1866*, has the following observations on Bismarck’s earlier politics :—

‘There is little doubt that the earliest aspirations of M. de Bismarck, when chosen by his Sovereign to represent Prussia in the Diet, were limited to establishing parity between the two great German courts, and that he would have been well satisfied with alternation in the presidency of the Diet, and such a division of influence in the Confederation as that nominal equality would have carried with it. When, however, the Prussian statesman found that Austria would abate no iota of her pretensions, and that her influence in the Diet was generally preponderant; when, further, his clear insight into the future saw only one mode of attaining his ends, and that the destinies his patriotism conceived for his own country could no otherwise be accomplished than by the humiliation of her rival, he at once threw himself into the task with all the energy of his nature. M. de Bismarck’s whole soul glowed with the passionate resolve to expel Austria from Germany. It was not in his nature to hesitate as to means; and neither moral nor material obstacles diverted him from his object. In fact, he entered on the contest unencumbered by scruples of any kind. To raise Prussia to the political status which he thought his country ought to hold was his religion. He entered the path of action with the fervour of a Mahomet enforcing a rival faith, and, like Mahomet, succeeded.’

Germany, which might be termed *civil war*, became imminent, and Von Bismarck had long not obscurely indicated that he should be prepared to face it. It may be regarded as due to that daring Minister's temper and character that the situation, when it had become strained beyond pacific arbitration, was at once seen and accepted, and the quarrel was fought out '*mit Blut und Eisen*'—to borrow his own expression. But the seeds of that quarrel had been sowing for centuries—ever since, in fact, the days of the Great Elector; and even if war between Austria and Prussia had been avoided in 1866, situations strained to the very verge of war would have recurred again and again, till the two rival forces would have met at last in armed conflict, as they did in that year, to decide which of the two should constitute the armed force of Germany for all time within present human prevision.

That dualism of power and influence in Germany which has apparently come to an end, had formed the main source of the whole recent action of Austria and Prussia in German politics, from the abortive Austrian attempt at a new scheme of Confederation in 1863, to the formation (excluding Austria) of the North German Confederation of 1866. The intervening episode of Prussian and Austrian participation in the 'Federal execution' on Denmark in 1864, was prompted on both sides by the same motive of rivalry, no idea of German right or European interest having anything to do with it. This was abundantly proved, as regarded the successful partner in that operation, by Prussia at last resting her title to the territory wrung by treaty from Denmark on the transfer of the Danish title to that territory; whereas the 'Schleswig-Holstein' war had been commenced on the German popular plea that Denmark had no title to hold, nor therefore to cede that territory. What the astute Prussian Minister himself had thought at a previous period of the German popular plea for the repeated raids on Denmark, had been expressed by him sixteen years before, in a speech he made in 1848 in the character of an independent member of the Prussian Second Chamber, when he stigmatised the first

armed attack on Holstein, in that year, as 'a most unjust, frivolous, and pernicious enterprise, undertaken to support a revolution without legitimate motive.' In 1852 Von Bismarck accepted from the late King of Denmark the Grand Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog, conferred in recognition of his activity in the pacification of the Danish duchies. At that latter epoch, Von Bismarck was acting as the representative of Prussia at the Frankfort Diet. To do him justice, he has never pretended any special sympathy with the popular pretexts on which the last invasion of Denmark was perpetrated. He struck into it on the part of Prussia to take it out of the hands of the Middle States and Austria; to get possession of the oyster, and leave the other claimants the shells. Why *Austria* made herself also an accomplice in the Danish raid, can only be explained on the motive assigned with little of decent reserve by her own diplomatists. Forsooth Austria could not afford to forfeit her share of German popularity, by refusing to lead the march of the minor German States, on the much besung 'Schleswig-Holstein!' And, above all, she felt herself as usual 'bound' (in American phrase) to prevent Prussia from acquiring an accession of territory—which Prussia has acquired in spite of her.

When Austria appealed to the vote of the Frankfort Diet, to frustrate the aforesaid purpose of Prussian acquisition of Danish territory, Prussia, under Count Bismarck's Government, at once treated that vote as a *casus belli*, seceded from the Confederation, and made her short and decisive campaign of Sadowa. And thus the old Austro-Prussian dualism came to its tragic termination.

As Austria would not accept Prussian hegemony in Germany, so France would not accept German ascendancy in Europe without an appeal to the God of Battles. We speak of France as France was lately represented, not only by the Imperial Government, but by the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary organs of popular opposition.

Five years back few would have singled out Count Bismarck as the Sphinx destined to devour an empire that could not read his riddle. Napoleon III. had hitherto been the



great propounder of enigmas in recent European politics. Everyone was attent to hearken to that which Louis the Silent thought fit to utter at rare intervals. 'He thinks reticence is his talent,' Count Bismarck is reported to have said in 1865 to a Spanish retired statesman, sojourning, like himself at Biarritz. The reverse of reticence certainly is the talent of the North German Chancellor. To know distinctly what he is driving at, and to drive straight at it, when circumstances appear favourable, is a main element of his power—a species of straightforwardness not by any means excluding simulation or dissimulation, as there may be occasion for either, but decidedly excluding all superfluous subtleties and aimless irresolutions. The main object which Count Bismarck's policy has effected had been the main object of German popular aspirations for a whole generation. That object is unity of national organisation and national force. The Prussian Minister's past successes and present ascendancy are chiefly owing to the clearness with which his eight years' embassy to Frankfort led him to discern that object, and the boldness and decision for which his accession to power gave scope in pursuing it. *Quand on sait ce qu'on veut, et qu'on le veut vite et bien,*' says a French historian,<sup>1</sup> '*on l'obtient toujours*'—always with the proviso that what one wills shall lie in the direction of the natural course of events, and shall take due account of the nature of men and things.

Von Bismarck had soon surmounted as a speaker the stammering hesitation of his first parliamentary appearances; but he never acquired that even, uninterrupted flow of words which generally indicates no high pressure of thought or passion forcing its way to utterance. In the marshalling of his topics there is not much parade of parliamentary logic—still less much display, smelling of the lamp, of parliamentary rhetoric. What is chiefly perceptible in Von Bismarck's speeches, from first to last, is the speaker's ever-present sense of the logic of the situation. It was this which sustained him during his four years' struggle with parliamentary majorities—it was this which he probably succeeded in convey-

<sup>1</sup> Mignet.

ing some sympathetic sense of, even to those majorities. 'When the King's Government,' he said on one occasion (the refusal of a vote of 6,000 thalers by the Chamber of Deputies to defray the charge of a military envoy at St. Petersburg) 'shows itself obstinate apparently for a trifle, in an exceptional case of this kind, you may be assured that, after mature examination, and following the dictates of its duty, it could not do otherwise than maintain this post, and refuse to consent to its suppression.' On another occasion (the discussion of the affairs of the Danish Duchies) Von Bismarck told the Chamber,—'For the last year and a half, if we could have openly declared the object at which we were aiming, I believe, gentlemen, you would not have met us with so much opposition. . . . If you were better initiated in the technical part of diplomatic affairs, it would not happen to you to put such pressure upon us as to reduce the Ministry to the alternative either of seeming by its silence to admit the justice of your censures, or, in refuting them, of expressing openly what, for political reasons, were better left to be understood.'

In the first period of Von Bismarck's Ministry, during which he represented what might be called His Majesty's Opposition to his Second Chamber, he stood upon his undoubting and determined confidence in the tenableness of his position as the King's Minister—no matter against what majority of the popular Chamber. If that Chamber would not pass the military budget—why, they were only one power out of three whose concurrence was required for its passing, and thus there was no more reason why the Crown and the Upper House should give way to the Second Chamber, than that the latter should come to some terms of compromise with the two other co-ordinate powers. If the President of the Chamber took upon him to call the King's Minister to order, the King's Minister refused to recognise the President's right to do so. It is an edifying example of German phlegm and German longanimity, that this strained state of relations between the legislative and executive powers could go on for four years without terminating in some more

violent situation or total rupture. 'All the Talents' in the Lower Chamber were firing away as incessantly at the King's Minister as the Paris forts have been doing lately at the Prussian positions, and the Minister was opposing an imperturbable front to all their verbal artillery, and telling them with cutting conciseness, and often happy humour, *leurs vérités* in return. After the conflict had terminated, in consequence of the events of 1866, in the sort of compromise which he had declared throughout could be its only possible termination, we find Count Bismarck, in the newly-convoked 'Reichstag' of the North German Confederation, in 1867, quietly replying as follows to an old antagonist in the Prussian Chamber (Duncker) who again met him in the new arena with the old topics <sup>1</sup>:

Since the last speaker has expressed a certain degree of surprise that I should have spent perhaps the best years of my public life in combating the parliamentary right of discussing the budget, I will just remind him that it may not be quite certain that the army which gained last year's battles, would have possessed the organisation by which it gained them, if, in the autumn of the year 1862 (the date of Von Bismarck's accession to power), no one had been found ready to undertake the conduct of affairs *according to His Majesty's orders*, and putting aside the resolution passed by the Chamber of Deputies on the 23rd September of that year (*viz.* the vote which *rejected*—a vote repeated and disregarded for four years in succession—the military budget brought forward and adhered to by his Majesty's Government).

Prussia possesses three Parliaments and one Bismarck; and the one Bismarck has hitherto been more than a match for the three Parliaments. Whether coercing or creating Parliaments—ignoring all constitutional control by those existing, or inaugurating universal suffrage for those newly called into existence, Count Bismarck's eight years' ad-

<sup>1</sup> There is a story told, characteristic of Count Bismarck's shrewd humour, on occasion of the first meeting of the newly-constituted North German Diet. The British Ambassador at Berlin having expressed some surprise to him that there should be so many 'Particularists' in that Assembly, Count Bismarck's answer was,—'Oh, you don't know the Germans: if every German had money enough, every German would keep a particular King all to himself.'

ministration of Prussia militant is something unprecedented in history. One governing principle may be traced throughout his conduct of affairs—the principle of repudiating Parliamentarism as a master while using it as an instrument. In carrying out that principle *per fas aut nefas*, through evil or good report, he may be said to have boldly staked his life, and to have barely saved it. Not to mention the five revolver shots of young Blind, delivered *Unter den Linden* on the eve of Count Bismarck's war upon Austria in 1866; not to mention the grave risk of parliamentary impeachment, and its possible consequences, if his Austrian war had turned out a failure instead of a triumph,<sup>1</sup> the successive sessions of the three Prussian Parliaments nearly killed him in 1868. The 'Prussian Landtag,' which had opened in the previous November, closed on February 23; the North-German 'Reichstag' opened on March 23; and, shortly after, the 'Zoll Parliament.' By June the overtasked Minister-President was fairly thrown on his back, and lay for months at his country house at Varzin, like Chatham at Hayes, unable to talk to anyone on business or to open a letter. The 'Book of Bismarck' places on record his obstinate nervous sleeplessness, against which his admirers and sympathisers amongst the public sent him all sorts of specifics. Amongst others, an old soldier advised him to smoke daily a pound of Porto Rico tobacco. Bismarck in reply presented the *brave* with a pipe and sundry pounds of the kindly prescribed narcotic, requesting him to have the obligingness to smoke it for him. The shaken nerves of the all-powerful Minister, whose unsparing sayings and doings had shaken the nerves of so many parliamentary Liberals, may in some sort be regarded as the Nemesis of Parliamentarism.

Edgar Quinet, the veteran and very honest apostle of 'the principles of 1789,' wrote in his '*Allemagne et Italie*,' at a date so far back as October 1831:—

<sup>1</sup> Bismarck's first Boswellian chronicler, Mr. George Heseikel, reports him to have often said among friends—'There are circumstances in which death on the scaffold is as honourable as death on the battle-field.' 'I can figure to myself worse modes of death than capital execution.'

This [German] race is ranging itself under the dictatorship of a people not more enlightened than its other populations, but more acquisitive, more ardent, more exacting, more versed in affairs. To the charge of that people it confides its ambitions, its rancours, its rapines, its *ruses*, its diplomacy, its violence, its glory, its external force and aggrandisement—reserving to itself the honest and obscure exercise of its internal liberties. Since the close of the Middle Ages the force and initiative of the German States passes from South to North along with the whole movement of modern civilisation. It is Prussia then that Northern Germany is beginning to make its instrument of aggrandisement?—Yes!—and if let alone, North Germany will push Prussia slowly forward to the murder of the old kingdom of France.

Then follows a passage which has acquired portentous import since the date at which it was written:—

In proportion as the Germanic system reconstitutes itself in its interior, it exercises a powerful influence on the population of the same language and origin which had been detached from that system by force in past ages. *We must not disguise from ourselves that the old wound of the treaty of Westphalia, and the cession of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, still bleed at the heart of Germany, as the treaties of 1815 at the heart of France.* That old wound, amongst a people who ruminate so long over their recollections and aspirations, is still traceable in all their ambitions and all their rancours which date but of yesterday. It has long been a grievance of the popular party in North Germany against the German governments that they did not force back those provinces from France in 1815, and, in their own phrase, did not hold the fox fast when they had him in their net. What durst not be attempted in 1815 has since become a sort of fixed idea of German national ambition.

It is only a short time ago that one of the great objects of apprehension amongst all who amused themselves with casting the horoscope of European futurity was *Pan-Slavism*. In the future, as in the past, the empire of the air, and the dominion of ideas, were assigned by common consent to Germany; and *Pan-Teutonism* never occurred for a moment as a word of menace of war and conquest to Europe. It must be frankly owned, however, nobody ever took Prussia for a realm of ideology, nor Count Bismarck for a dreamer of dreams or seer of visions. What he sees and handles is

men and things in the concrete; he is no devotee of 'Geist,' no professorial apostle of 'the Idea.' (In our younger days it used to be called 'the Divine Idea'—the 'Divine' has somehow dropped out of the vocabulary of later German philosophism.) That Germany should dream dreams, and Prussia lend her military strength and skill to realise them, was a combination which only of late years presented itself to prophetic forecast. Nothing could seem less substantial in matter-of-fact foundation than the 'Schleswig-Holstein' enthusiasm of six or seven years back in Germany. Nothing could have been used more dexterously as the stepping-stone to substantial Prussian aggrandisement. Nothing can now seem wilder than the Pan-Teutonic readings of European history since Charlemagne, with which the German professorial-political press is at this moment teeming. But if these readings find faith with the youth of Germany, the rank and file are thus found for armies ready to place themselves under Prussia's command for future wars of conquest.

The French fixed idea of 'natural boundaries' is fairly transcended in extravagance by the notions now zealously disseminated in Germany of what is termed German nationality, as the only legitimate basis of dominion for the future, wherever any vestige of that nationality is extant. The most comprehensive and complete form in which we have met with the German claims to something like universal dominion founded on these notions, is in a pamphlet entitled 'Unsere Grenzen,' by Wolfgang Menzel. We give precedence of notice to this publication because it made its appearance before the war of 1870, and also because it lays a basis broad enough to support whatever rights of conquest and dominion Pan-Teutonism can ever have to assert over the mixed and mongrel races which, according to the author, and all his Pan-Teutonic followers in the German press, have corrupted and degraded their blood and language by Latin, Celtic, or Slavonic admixtures. Herr Wolfgang Menzel, then—a popular periodical Polyhistor, much read for many years by *Pfahlbürger* and Philistines in all parts of Germany

—proclaims modern Germany the legitimate inheritrix of the right of conquest made good by ancient Germany over the enervated and corrupted Roman Empire. All those races which have mixed their blood and enriched their language with the surviving populations and traditions of the antique culture and civilisation—just in proportion as they have drawn from other fountains than ‘the pure well of *German* undefiled’—are themselves defiled and corrupted, and unworthy of empire in Europe. The modern English language, the modern French race, have alike been corrupted by such admixtures. It might perhaps be worth asking Herr Wolfgang Menzel if he is quite certain whether Norman energy may not have made on the whole, in England, a mixture rather vigorous than otherwise with Saxon solidity—whether Prussia herself may not partly owe her ascendancy over the purer German races to the fact that the Prussian border people, warlike from age to age, is *not* pure German? \*

What we have ventured to designate as the Pan-Teutonic creed widely preached throughout Germany may be shortly summarised as follows:—Whatever portions of Europe are inhabited by populations sprung from the same stock as the great German nation, especially if they ever acknowledged any sort of allegiance to the never compact and now long defunct so-styled Holy Roman Empire, are to be regarded without exception as wrongfully wrenched from German dominion; and it is a question of time only, and policy, *when* Germany is to claim them back again. The more successful the graft of any scion of the old German stock on any other non-German national body, the more complete the assimilation to such other body of the population of any province which, at any period since the days of Charlemagne, owed allegiance (however indifferently paid) to the Holy Roman Empire, or the more triumphantly, throughout a long course of ages, any such province may have vindicated an independent national existence for itself—the more heavy the arrear of wrong demanding reparation to the aggrieved German Fatherland—the more guilty all accessaries to the protracted

degradation and corruption which must have been undergone by any race which has been made to cease to be German; nay, worse, to become something else. It does not seem clear that England may not be called to account for having suffered Norman to spoil the good work of Saxon invasion, and the importation of 'Welsch' idioms to adulterate the purity of the language of the Nibelungen Lied.

But if the reconquest of England is adjourned indefinitely by the moderation of Herr Wolfgang Menzel, that of German Switzerland, Flemish Belgium, and Holland are regarded as mere questions of time by the more impetuous mind of Dr. Adolph Wagner, who writes *since* Sedan. Not that he would resort, at present, to force of arms, to recover for Germany these 'abtrünnige' members of the much-mutilated Pan-Teutonic body. All he would stipulate for immediately are certain rectifications of frontier at the expense of Switzerland, Belgium, and perhaps Holland. But he tells the Swiss, Flemings, and Hollanders alike, that they are a set of stupid 'Particularists' for fancying they have any valid claims to separate existence which can be opposed for a moment to the paramount claim of the Mighty Mother of all Teutons, to call them back at some future auspicious day under her eagle wings. Swiss heroism is fabulous; Swiss republicanism takes saucy airs on itself, not to be tolerated in the neighbourhood, now drawing closer, of the Prussian drill-sergeant. Dutch nationality might, it is reluctantly admitted, have had some excuse for asserting itself in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries against the Houses of Austria and Bourbon, but can have no prospect of permanently asserting itself now against the House of Hohenzollern. It is the 'manifest destiny' of great states to annex little ones in their neighbourhood, especially if the latter have the misfortune to be derivable by professorial antiquarian research from a common race. If they object to absorption, that only shows the more plainly their perverse 'Particularism,' and makes it the more necessary that they should be brought betimes for their good under the Prussian drill-sergeant.



When we see Germany, to repeat the words of Edgar Quinet, 'confiding to the charge of Prussia its ambitions, its rancours, its rapines, its *ruses*, its diplomacy, its violence, its glory, its external force and aggrandisement,' we are involuntarily reminded of the horse in the fable 'who had the whole range of a meadow to himself, but a stag coming and damaging the pasture, the horse, anxious to have his revenge, asked the man if he could not assist him in punishing the stag. "Yes," said the man, "only let me get a bit in your mouth, and get on your back, and I will find the weapons." The horse agreed, the man mounted accordingly, and the horse has been from that time forward the slave of man.'

We leave the moral of the fable to the consideration of the German 'Hengst' or 'Horsa.' It is certain he has put a man on his back, and run down the Gallic stag. Remains the question—Having got the man on his back, when is he likely to get him off again? The future conquests of Pan-Teutonism are no more to be made, than Count Bismarck predicted the past were to be made, by parliamentary speeches, but by 'blood and iron.' It is for the German 'Hengst' or 'Horsa' to bethink himself how much of the blood may be his, how much of the iron may enter into his own soul.

What is an Emperor? A personage at any rate as different as possible from the former French doctrinaire definition of a constitutional king—viz. a chief of the State who reigns but does not govern. An emperor of the Augustus-Cæsar type was a disguised despot, who pretended not to be what he was—what his honester uncle had openly proclaimed himself (and was therefore assassinated)—viz. perpetual *Imperator*, in the city as well as the camp. An emperor of the Charlemagne or Otho type was a Frankish or German sovereign, who pretended (with papal consecration) to be what he was not—a legitimate successor to the world sovereignty of the Cæsars, as the popes pretended to be heirs (by forged testaments) to the Roman dominion of those Cæsars. An emperor of the modern Prussian type is a

soldier-king, invited chiefly by three minor kings to call himself emperor, because it would not have suited those three minor kings, not yet 'improved out of existence,' to bow down to him as a feudal or federal superior, under any designation of less dignity than the newly-revived imperial title. •

Will the Prussian Empire be peace? The future answer to that question must depend on the degree in which the general German character may have digestive vigour sufficient to absorb and assimilate to itself the particular Prussian character. While Prussian partisans have never been tired of denouncing 'Particularism' in all other quarters, Prussia is herself the great exemplar of Particularism in German history. To this very day her spokesmen cannot celebrate the unity of Germany without finishing off with a flourish of trumpets on the exaltation of Prussia. At Longchamps her soldiers acclaimed their new Emperor as Prussia's King. The question of the future is, whether the imperial title—awarded with reluctant alacrity to this great Cuckoo in Mother Germania's nest, by the fluttering councils of those of the lesser nestlings which still keep their place in it beside that terribly *mauvais coucheur*—will permanently express the military power and policy of Prussia, or whether that domineering individuality military and political, may haply by degrees merge and lose itself in the United Germany of the future, whose natural development the friends of European peace and progress would fain look forward to as likely to be pacific rather than warlike.

We should be sorry to charge on Prussian policy now the conscious intention of keeping open the hereditary feud—the *Erbfeindschaft*—with France, as the best guarantee for the consolidation and aggrandisement of the Prussian military system. But so long as France shall wince under the enormous securities to keep the peace now exacted of her, and so long as Germany shall retain possession of Metz as a 'standing menace,' and conspicuous evidence of national humiliation to France, so long may Prussia look forward to the future with well-grounded confidence that it will cut out

work for her which Germany can transfer to no other arms. The progress of Prussia to empire has been throughout military, and it would seem that no otherwise than in the shape of undivided military command, to which national necessities, in the future as in the past, shall secure obedience, can she very long retain undisputed possession of that imperial position which a good moiety of Germany, with its 'Particularist' sympathies and antipathies, would otherwise refuse her. For our own part we have some difficulty in conceiving by what other qualities Prussia can retain empire than those by which she has gained it. Assuredly, neither with rose-water, nor Cologne water were the immense displacements of power in Europe effected in favour of Prussia, which have been witnessed within the last lustre of European history. Austria struck down—France struck down—Prussia is perforce recognised in her achieved supremacy. But is it possible to suppose the military aristocracy and their monarch—who have placed Prussia where she stands—*unconscious* of the sustained efforts which will be required to keep her at that pitch of pre-eminence? They are not going to step off the Prussian pedestal of their present ascendancy; and that pedestal is cast from the bronze of the captured cannon of every Power which has thrust itself athwart Prussia in her path to empire. She has fought her way up to the military command of Germany; and she well knows she cannot let the arms rust by which that command was won.

# GENERAL LISTS OF WORKS

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